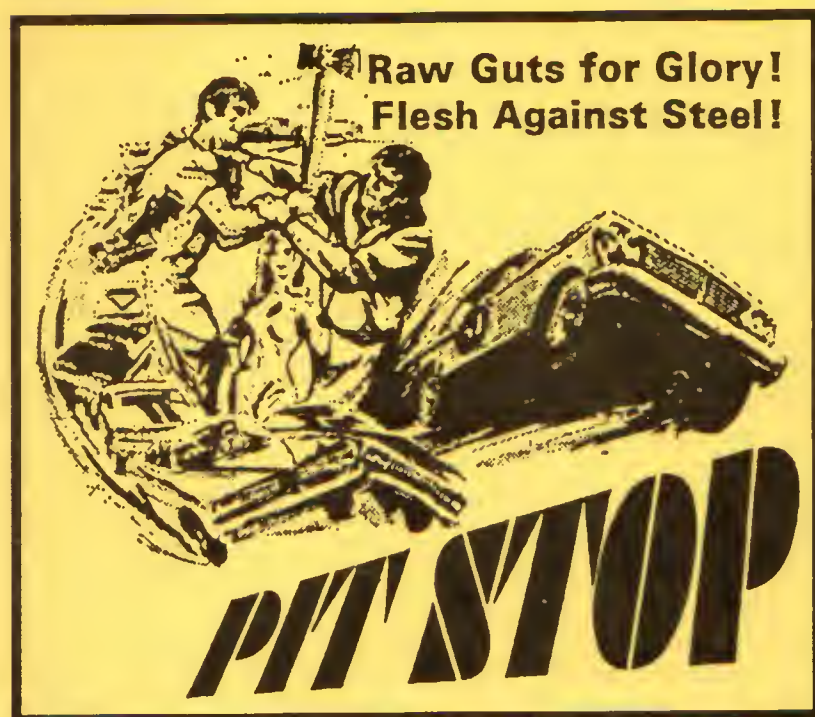


SHOCK CINEMA

NUMBER 7

\$ 4.00



Your Guide to Cult Movies,
Arthouse Oddities,
Drive-In Swill, and
Underground Obscurities!!

INSIDE THE INFERNO OF EROTICISM



EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

Yes, believe it or not, it's SHOCK CINEMA #7. The review-zine devoted to the most obscure films and videos imaginable. And though most magazines pigeonhole themselves with a particular genre or time period, we don't give a goddamn what we cover in these pages. If we watch it, if we like it, and (especially) if we hate it—you'll see it here. Whether it's old, mildewed pics from the '60s that haven't been screened since the Elgin was around, or crazed independent efforts that are trucked around by their director in hopes of making a little beer money. It's been awhile since my last issue (I can hear all my regular readers muttering "lazy fuck"—well, let's see how long it takes *you* to put out a 'zine), but at long last, for better or worse, here it is.

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY / BACK ISSUES: SHOCK CINEMA regulars know all too well that *this* is their dose for '95. If you want to be assured of receiving the next, fat edition, you can send cash, check or money order (payable to li'l old me, Steve Puchalski) and the issue will pop up in your mail box the moment it's cranked out...As for back issues: #1, 2 and 3 are out of print, but I still have a few copies of #4, 5 and 6 for a measly \$4 apiece (postpaid). Plus, if you order 'em soon, I'll be able to afford enough whiskey to begin work on my next issue.

Next, allow me to give a generic "thank you" to everyone who dropped me a line about the last edition, tossed a plug into their own 'zine, or sent me a scribbled message reminding me "Isn't it about time to get off your ass and put out another issue?" And although this edition took 14 months to produce, it's not as if I've spent the last year belly-up on my apartment floor, watching the fungi grow in the empty beer bottles. I've actually been a busy boy this past year, writing for cool 'zines such as Gutter Trash, Visions of Excess, European Trash Cinema, plus regular gigs for the more mainstream (but higher paying) Fangoria and Science-Fiction Channel Magazine. But like a cat drawn to his litter box, I'm once again pulled back to this homemade mag, where I can really spew my crackpot opinions (and boy, did I find some rank stuff for this issue). Strangely enough, I began to have a glimmer of faith in the studio system again when they started dumping their chump change into the recent avalanche of independents. Because all it takes is one \$100 million grosser like PULP FICTION, and suddenly every Tinseltown bigwig is in search of the next Tarantoid. It reminds me of the late '60s, when every counterculture cretin with a movie camera was directing a studio pic in the wake of EASY RIDER's mega-success. (Of course, that ended the moment everyone got straight and realized most of 'em sucked.) I'll keep my fingers crossed for a new gonzo renaissance, plus the hope that today's crop of indie 'geniuses' doesn't piss it all away once the studios come courting. Or else in the year 2025 all they'll have to show for themselves is the ability to drag their grandkids to the local Blockbuster, ask the pimpy clerk for their one-and-only feature and get a resounding "Never heard of the thing" (or better still, "Is that one of those no-budget features that President Eric Stoltz starred in?"). Of course, I'd rather watch an indie piece of shit than a studio piece of shit like [insert any wretched Hollywood Pictures release], but it's rare to find a halfway decent film of any sort nowadays. At least lowlife genre pix are flourishing, thanks to home video and cable TV, which laps up anything with the words "kickboxer", "vampire" or "bikini car wash" in the title. Of course, that's fine for shut-ins, but for folks who actually like to leave their apartments and see their sleaze in an honest-to-goodness grindhouse, the New York City exploitation scene sucks. The Deuce is dead and buried with new, clean, Disney-run theatres popping up in place of all the old triple-bill haunts that deformed an entire generation. Even the nearest drive-in

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(an hour's car ride away) only shows studio bile like LEGENDS OF THE FALL (ooh, now *there's* a good drive-in movie! What's next, VANYA ON 42nd STREET?). Of course, if you're looking for sleazy faves there's always the ultra-rare retrospect, like Film Forum's "Blaxploitation, Baby!" series—but it just isn't the same as it used to be. Because instead of urine-stenched toilets, junkies firing up in the middle of the movie and derelicts hacking up lungfuls of phlegm (ahh, I'm getting a little misty remembering the good ol' days...), you get a shoebox full of slumming Gen X'ers who have a hissy when you start popping tall boys in the middle of MANDINGO. And what can you say about a concession stand that serves carrot cake and cappicino? Help! It almost makes you thank god for fourth-generation bootlegs, so you can torch up in your living room, pound a few cold ones, and catch pics which will never even get a release in the States, because the studios are too busy with Costner ego-trips like WETDREAM, er WATERWORLD. Oh, maybe I'm just getting cynical (Who, me?) since I've had to wade knee-deep through so much muck this year, helmed by no-talent hacks who should be buried alive in their own press releases. Thank goodness I was able to find a handful of cool stuff for this issue, or else I'd *really* be pissed off.

Well, even if the motion picture industry sucks, at least my personal life *doesn't* for once. And so much has been happening on the home front over the last year, it only makes me realize how quickly times change. It was only a couple issues ago that I spent most of my editorial babbling about how miserable I was (sniff sniff). Well, lemme warn you that you aren't gonna get *any* of that wallowing this time around, kids, because the previous year has been a ball—not to mention, further proof of why I took so long with this issue...Cutting right to the chase, the biggest news is my recent engagement to Ms. Anna Burmeister. Yes, after several years of being good friends and nearly a year of domestic sin, the two of us have finally made it official, complete with a diamond large enough to choke a sewer rat. And this entire issue is dedicated to her (not to mention her ability to deal with me hunched over the computer 'til dawn, or how pissy I can get in the middle of a writer's block). Nowadays, we're both [continued on Page 8]

FILM FLOTSAM

JIM RIDLEY; Nashville, Tennessee.

CASINO ROYALE (1967). One night I fell asleep with a fever and woke up in the middle of this mind-boggling James bond parody on the late show. The next day, when I tried to summarize this indescribable mess for some friends, they thought I'd dosed my Robbitussin with peyote. David Niven and Peter Sellers both play James Bond; midway though, Sellers is killed by a marching band, every set turns a different psychedelic pattern, and the archvillain behind the movie's plot for world domination is revealed to be... Woody Allen. Don't miss the finale, in which Indians parachute from bombers, Allen swallows an atomic Alka-Seltzer that triggers a doomsday burp, and the entire cast ends up strumming harps in Heaven. Seven directors—among them John Huston and allegedly Orson Welles—managed to wrest incoherence from the jaws of mediocrity.

TRILOGY OF TERROR (1975). The most blood-curdling experience of my cinematic youth—apart from the TV trailers for IT'S ALIVE and SUSPIRIA—was the final section of this otherwise-lame Dan Curtis TV anthology with Karen Black. Does anyone else remember this saga of a woman alone in an apartment with a creepy companion—a "Zuni fetish doll" with piranha teeth, a lethal javelin, and just one instruction: "Don't break the chain"? Naturally, the chain slips off, and for the next 30 minutes the damned thing emits a ghastly chatter and tries its best to turn Black into chutney. Mr. Curtis, thank you for traumatizing an entire generation of third-graders. It's almost enough to make up for BURNT OFFERINGS.

MIAMI BLUES (1990). Here's an overlooked gem—a sick goodie from the twisted mind of crime novelist Charles Willeford that plays like the Ray Dennis Steckler tribute Robert Altman never made. Alec Baldwin plays a just-released con who takes lethargic cop Fred Ward for his badge, his gun and his dentures; while Ward searches Miami for his missing choppers, Baldwin shacks up with a dimwitted hooker (Jennifer Jason Leigh), goes on a crime spree and winds up getting his fingers chopped off by a pawn-shop harridan (Shirley Stoler from THE HONEYMOON KILLERS and SEVEN BEAUTIES). The writer-director, George Armitage (DARKTOWN STRUTTERS), keeps the off-beat black humor whizzing by from the moment Baldwin casually greets a Hare Krishna in the airport—and coolly snaps his finger in half like a breadstick! A real treat.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE FABULOUS STAINS (1981). An amazing artifact from the post-punk days, with Diane Lane as singer Third-Degree Burns, a suburban

SoCal answer to Poly Styrene who forms an inept but potent all-girl garage band (featuring a teenaged Laura Dern!). When the band somehow takes off, Lane dons see-through blouses, cuts off her hair and inspires a revolt movement among her peers. Along the way you get the Tubes' Fee Waybill as a washed-up cockrocker, assorted members of the Sex Pistols, and a rather prescient portrayal of militant teenage feminists that predates the riot-grrl manifesto by a decade. Director/record producer Lou Adler couldn't put the camera in the right place if his life depended on it, but this still remains a blast. Be a Professional!

A FACE IN THE CROWD (1957). You thought Andy Griffith was creepy in PRAY FOR THE WILDCATS [SC#6]? Wait until you see this folksy, lovable TV star as snarling reactionary demagogue Lonesome Rhodes, a no-count folk-singing prisoner who gets discovered by TV producer Patricia Neal and becomes a nationwide phenomenon. What's weird is that Rhodes—who turns his good-ol'-

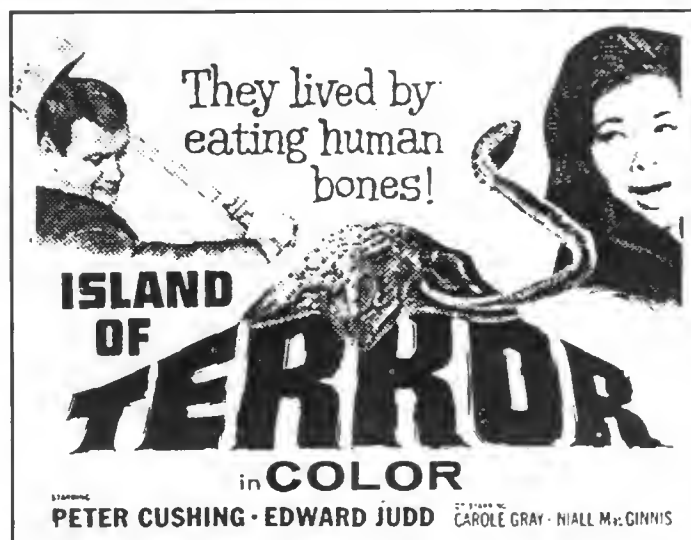
boy act on and off as need be and despises his fans for the gullible rubes they are—isn't much different from Griffith's TV persona: it's hard to see Mayberry in quite the same way once you watched Rhodes screw, swindle and swagger his way to the top of the heap. (Mojo Nixon must love this movie.) Naturally, this being the 1950s, Rhodes ultimately takes a fall—but by that time he's seduced Neal, corrupted innocent teenage cheerleader Lee Remick (her first movie), and virtually manhandled his way into the White House. Directed by Elia Kazan, the movie's indictment of TV-drugged sheep seems 40 years ahead of its time—wait until you see Rhodes' "Cracker Barrel" variety show—and the commercial for Vitajex Vitamins rivals Elvis' big number in JAILHOUSE ROCK for ballsy effrontery. Short of discovering Don Knotts in a Tijuana donkey flick, this is the real skeleton in Andy Taylor's closet.

NEAR DARK (1987). IF INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE depicts the vampire as debauched fop, this outta-sight low-budget shocker shows the vampire as ornery white trash. Adrian Pasdar is the unfortunate kid who picks up pretty Jenny Wright and gets more than he bargained for—namely, the company of Confederate bloodsuckers Lance Henriksen, Jenette Goldstein and Bill Paxton, who have been draining victims since the days of Stonewall Jackson. Initiated into their cult, Pasdar spends his days trapped in a mobile home and his nights kicking ass, and he starts to dig it—until he learns his adorable little sister is next on tap. The director, Kathryn Bigelow (THE LOVELESS), shows the spectral beauty of the vampires'



ABC Tuesday Movie of the Week
Ⓢ8:30pmⓈ

nightworld in a way few filmmakers have dared; the most fun, however, comes from the demented Paxton, Satan as shit-kicker, who has a high old time among the damned. Worth watching just for the scene in which the vampires take out a bar full of bikers while "Fever" throbs on the soundtrack—those razor-sharp spurs sure can hurt.



ISLAND OF TERROR (1966). This scared the hell out of me many years ago, when I was a kid and the world still had cool horror-movie hosts. Sir Cecil Creep in Nashville introduced this blood-curdling Hammer production about a remote British island beset by "space amoebas." These evolutionary wonders have gooseneck lamps for heads, bodies like turtles, and move about as fast as William Conrad on lithium—but that doesn't stop them from attaching themselves to various unfortunates and sucking out their bone marrow! The movie was best remembered for one unforgettable scene: Peter Cushing takes an axe to an amoeba, only to have it spew a puddle of Spaghetti-o's from its gushing wound. ILM, eat your heart out.

IN A LONELY PLACE (1950). Without question, the darkest, nastiest, most disturbing glimpse Hollywood has ever taken into the void. Humphrey Bogart is hard-drinking, self-loathing Dixon Steele; a once-great screenwriter, he's too angry, too bitter and self-destructive to be anything other than a menace. He makes the mistake of giving a young bargirl a ride home one night; after a night's chat and no action, the girl turns up dead. As the cops close in, Steele strikes up a romance with a woman (Gloria Grahame) as wounded and bitter as he is: the movie's internal suspense comes from our knowledge that neither of them will be content to let their happiness last. As Steele, Bogart immerses himself in this loser's consuming hatred—it took some guts for a matinee idol to play a wife-beating, brutal bully; it's a measure of Bogart's talent that we can't hate the poor bastard. The movie was directed by Nicholas Ray, who never flinched when exploring man's blackest, most

psychotic impulses (see the remarkable first half of **ON DANGEROUS GROUND**).

TICKS (1994). Now here's a charming idea for a movie—giant deer ticks hopped up on marijuana pesticide and looking for trouble. Lucky for the ticks, a camp for troubled teens is located nearby, allowing the vicious vermin to chomp on the likes of **NEWHART**'s Peter Scolari; what follows is a non-stop parade of disgusting, splattery special effects, with parasites busting out of Clint Howard's head and emerging from gooey blood-filled sacs. If you remember those old Pepsi commercials with Michael Jackson, and have ever wondered what "Tap Dance Kid" Alfonso Ribeiro would look like with enormous tick pincers ripping through his intestinal walls, you'll probably want to rent this instead of **THE PIANO**.

TRISTER KEANE; New York City.

DINNER FOR ADELE [Adela Jeste Nevecerela] [a.k.a. Nick Carter in Prague] (1978). It's not often you run across a Czechoslovakian send-up of detective movies/novels featuring a man-eating plant named Adele. Michael Docolomansky stars as renowned N.Y.C. private eye Nick Carter, who heads to Prague to locate a missing Great Dane and is spun through a series of ingeniously silly escapades. Our suave sleuth runs the gauntlet of beautiful temptresses, tests out ridiculously-retro spy gadgets, and encounters a Mad Gardener whose Master Plan involves feeding his old Botany Professor to his carnivorous flora in revenge for a failing grade. Best of all, director Oldrich Lipsky hired the fabulous Jan Svankmajer to animate Adele, and from its eager tendrils to its slurping tongue, Jan does one hell of a job. Deft arthouse absurdity.

THE AMERICAN DREAMER (1971). Now that Dennis Hopper has jumped on the Hollywood gravy train and left all dignity in the dust (it's not just those ridiculous Nike commercials, either—have you *tried* to watch **CHASERS**? Get back on the bottle, Dennis, please?) I wish some enterprising video distributor would unearth this spastic documentary. Filmed around his home in Taos, New Mexico, while at the height of Hopper's counterculture notoriety, filmmakers Lawrence Schiller and L.M. Kit Carson capture him at his brain-burnt best. He babbles his inane philosophies, looks totally fucked out of his gourd,

cavorts with young groupies, and sits in his Editing Room trying to make some sense out of his mountain of **LAST MOVIE** footage, which he just hauled back from Peru. This pic wants to be a Portrait of an Artist as a Young Rebel, but instead, it's a rambling, hilarious ode to over-indulgence and out-of-control egotism. Best of all, you get the feeling that if this Hopper of '71 met the Hopper of '95, he'd take a piss on the sober ol' geezer's head.

THE APE WOMAN [La Donna Scimmia] (1963). Director Marco Ferreri will never be accused of good taste. He's had Gerard Depardieu castrating himself in **THE LAST WOMAN**, Ornella Muti sewing up her own vagina in **TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS**, plus his entire cast engorging themselves to death in **LAGRANDE BOUFFE**. This early work simply proves that Ferreri has always been a twisted fuck. Ugo Tognazzi's banal life abruptly

"I'D RATHER DIE FIGHTING THAN DIE GETTING FAT."

Dennis Hopper



The Star of "Easy Rider"

DENNIS HOPPER is THE AMERICAN DREAMER

His own life, filmed as he lives it.

changes when he meet Maria (Annie Girardot), a woman covered in thick, animal-like fur. This particularly grim fantasy has Ugo marrying this newfound cashcow, exploiting her in a sideshow, and when she dies during childbirth (after giving birth to a short-lived monkey-baby), the bastard sells their embalmed bodies to a museum, only to regret his asswipe behavior. After that it gets *really* depressing. Hey, sounds like a surefire Fox sitcom to me!

SCREAMPLAY (1985). Troma distributes so much utter dreck, that it's a shame they never gave this no-budget, 16mm, black-and-white pick-up a fair release—at least on home video. This dreamchild of director/co-writer/editor Rufus Butler Seder is a bizarre melange of murder and humor, with Rufus himself in the starring role (as well as most of the production crew popping up in supporting parts). Seder plays Edgar Allen, a novice mystery writer who moves to Hollywood in search of celluloid fame and fortune, but instead gets a job as the janitor of the Welcome Apartments. Then, when his screenplay disappears, characters begin dying as per his scripted murders. Though it doesn't exactly work as either comedy or horror, this is a crude but weird indie, complete with characters who look like refugees from a Nathaniel West wet dream, and George Kuchar popping up as the only unconfused actor in sight.

STEVEN MILLAN; Henderson, NV.

When it comes to digging up ultra obscure genre features, you really manage to pull out more heavily forgotten titles than both Michael Weldon and Thomas Weisser can unearth from their large video archives.

But anyway, I decided to write in just to share with you a little memory of when my high school Film Studies teacher told us about the day he took a class of his on a field trip to the set of none other than SKIDOO [SC#6], which spent a day of filming at the South San Francisco County Jail, shooting the infamous sequence of the Great One himself (alias Jackie Gleason) experiencing his first acid trip, and using it as a means of escape. Needless to say that the whole Film Studies class had a bad day when they found out they were experiencing the making of a bad movie-to-be faster than they could smell a dead rat, with a nude young lady on the set being the only pleasurable behind-the-scene experience that they would have to excitedly rush home and tell Mom and Pop about.

Before I go, here are a few of my Film Flotsam choices that I think people will joyfully discover...

DAUGHTER OF DEATH [a.k.a. Julie Darling] (1981). What would an issue of SHOCK CINEMA or the Film Flotsam column be without one of the films of Sybil Danning, who (like Fred Olen Ray and Ed Wood) is a beloved bad movie icon with her own irresistible charm. This little known U.S./German production (directed by Paul Nicholas, a.k.a. Lutz Schaawaechter, who would next direct her in CHAINED HEAT) is one of her best, casting Sybil as the new bride of recently widowed Anthony Franciosa. Tony's psychotic teen daughter (Isabelle Mejias) has an incestuous complex for her father and attempts to murder her new stepmother, even employing her mother's rapist-

murderer to aid in the insidious plan. Chock full of surprises and shocks, which include attempted child suffocation, bloody shotgun wounds, a broken glass bottle groin-stabbing, and a great knock-out surprise ending, with Danning giving a strong and sympathetic performance to add to the film's viewing pleasure.

THE ROOMMATES (1972). Ace blaxploitation filmmaker Arthur Marks (BUCKTOWN, FRIDAY FOSTER, J.D.'S REVENGE) directed and co-wrote (with John Durran) this early drive-in feature that's been too long lost and forgotten, and deserves to be released to video. This is a nice and sleazy combo of several sub-genres

(Lusty Girl Buddy, Summer Camp Romps, Teen Boy/20-ish Girl and Older Man/Younger Girls Cliches, and the beloved Mad Slasher theme that any film can't seem to function without) as it depicts the adventures of five young college ladies vacationing at a summer water-ski camp where the mentioned cliches kick in and take place, with plenty of nice woodland and lake scenery, a nerdy mother-fixated psychotic youth, every single male cast member sporting Zalman King's then-hip YOUNG LAWYERS look, early '70s drive-in vixens Pat Woodell, Roberta Collins, and Marki Bey (of SUGAR HILL fame) as some of the heroines, and enough good, clean, old fashioned nudity and sex scenes with very pretty ladies in a long absent classic that puts much of today's braindead sex comedy/drama genre films to sheer shame.

CHESTY ANDERSON: U.S. NAVY (1975). This one features SUPER-VIXENS' Shari Eubank in her only mainstream R-rated feature. She plays a WAVE member who teams up with Playboy playmate Rosanne Katon and two other girls to track down mob boss Frank Campanella, who uses a garbage disposal business as a cover and has killed Eubank's kid sister to help cover up a scandal for his corrupt, cross dressing senator friend. Although there's hardly any nudity in this film, it is

LLOYD KAUFMAN and MICHAEL HERZ present
a TROMA TEAM RELEASE of a BOSTON MOVIE COMPANY PRODUCTION



...takes **HOLLYWOOD**
by the throat
and **STRANGLES** it!

thankfully full of never ending car chases and martial arts-flavored catfights in the bars and Navy bunkhouse quarters. It also goes in the history books as the only action/comedy to feature ex-LOVE BOAT alumni/G.O.P. member Fred Willard, the immortal Timothy Carey stealing the show as the kingpin's singing henchman, and cameo appearances by Scatman Crothers, the notorious Dyanne Thorne as a fully clothed nurse, Uschi Digard as the kingpin's girlfriend, ex-HILL STREET BLUES alumni Betty Thomas, Nell Carter, and a man eating plant that fully devours a failed hitman.

IRON MONKEY (1993). From the studio of renowned Asian producer Tsui Hark comes what's undoubtedly the best martial arts action film since the days when both Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan first stepped foot on film. Yet another Wong Fei Hong tale, but this one has Hong as a little kid (played by that amazing karate kicking kid from BLADE OF FURY) and Hong's father (the very underrated Donnie Yen, of the TIGER CAGE film and IN THE LINE OF DUTY IV fame) as the main hero, who both aid a Robin Hood-style bandit (Yu Rong Guang) in battling the corrupt government figure who is bent on turning his town into a dustpit. Plenty of amazingly incredible action here, including a brawl with assassins in the town square, and a

literally blazing climactic showdown with our heroes and the lead baddies in an arena of burning stakes that ranks right up there with anything that Chan and Jet Li have ever done, and makes America's top action lameasses Don "The Dragon" Wilson and Lorenzo Lamas wish they could get off their pathetic butts to do stuff like this.

MILES WOOD; London, England.

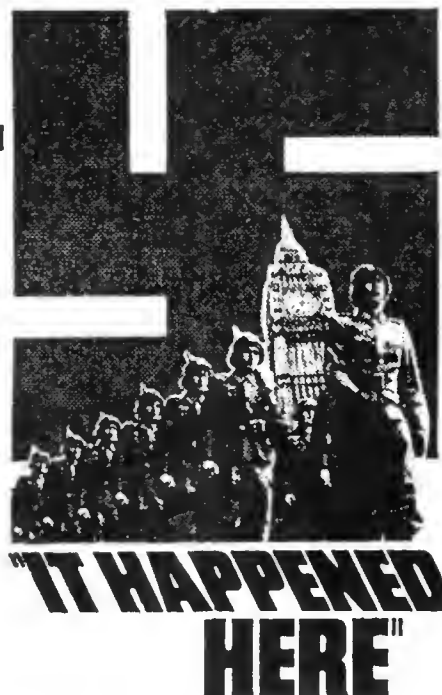
IT HAPPENED HERE (1963). Film archivist Kevin Brownlow and military historian Andrew Mollo combined to make this one of a kind feature about what life in England would have been like if the Nazis had invaded in 1940. The situation is related through the story of a nurse (Pauline Murray) who becomes a party member so she can get on with her job. She witnesses her friend being taken away for harboring an injured fugitive and is sent to a hospital where she finds all the patients' beds empty the day after they arrive. The narrative isn't really that compelling—it takes about half an hour to get going—and there's the occasional political sermonizing, but this low-budget film which took 7 years to complete is incredibly convincing. Shot in a semi-documentary manner, the makers paint an incredibly realistic picture of a non-existent situation (remember Rossellini was depicting *actual* events in the likes of *PAISAN* and *GERMANY YEAR ZERO*). Not a total success but an extraordinary achievement and a must-see.

LIQUID DREAMS (1991). Candice Daly, looking a bit like a cross between Kim Basinger and Linda Hamilton (so who's complaining?) plays Eve, who gets a job in a mysterious organization which includes strip clubs and something called Neurovid, in order to discover the facts behind her sister's death. *LIQUID DREAMS* could have made for a great XXX movie, with its industrial beat soundtrack, pop promo visuals and potentially erotic and interesting storyline. Unfortunately, there's hardly any nudity, and the plot—about using endorphines as the ultimate drug—ends up being spurious. There are cameos from the likes of Mink Stole, and Paul Bartel as a neck and ear fetishist (Daly: "Why don't you buy me a drink?" Bartel: "I'd rather taste your ear wax again") but the whole enterprise is pretty much a non-starter.

THE BABY (1974). Social worker Anjanette Comer discovers that "Baby", a fully grown man who wears diapers, crawls around on all fours and sleeps in a cot has been deliberately kept this way by his mother, Ruth Roman (once glamorous star of several fifties flicks, here having a high old time as the ultimate Big Bad Mama), with willing assistance from her equally man-hating daughters. When Comer tries to help "Baby" she's drugged, tied up and thrown in the basement, but "Baby" comes to her aid and the two escape. But is Comer all she seems? A particularly sick film, especially when you consider its child abuse theme (this probably seemed more pertinent as I watched it after a TV programme about the police tracking down a pedophile ring). Ludicrous but unpleasant scenes of an adult male acting like a 6 month old sit uneasily with twist-in-the-tale horror conventions.

LAST SUMMER (1969). The perfect antidote—if you need one—to all those AIP beach movies which had bored teenagers having fun all summer long. In this adaptation of Evan Hunter's novel, bored teenagers Richard Tho-

What
would
have
happened
if the
German
Army
had
crossed
the
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Channel



mas and Bruce Davison hook up with bored teenager Barbara Hershey and drink beer and smoke pot. They nurse an injured bird and teach it how to fly again but keep it on a leash, and when it bites Hershey she kills it without remorse. They hook up with shy Cathy Burns, who falls for Thomas, but he can't express his true feelings and on one hot afternoon the three sexually assault her. Writer-director team Eleanor and Frank Perry made some pretty strange of-

their-time films around this period including *THE SWIMMER*, but this is their finest work, and even in the butchered print I saw which eviscerated the powerful, climactic—almost apocalyptic—rape scene (as well as Hershey's topless shots) this is an extraordinary film, conveying not just the ennui of the New York seaside locale but also the disturbing emptiness of the characters. Many critics only noticed Hershey could act after films like *HANNAH AND HER SISTERS*, but in her early roles such as this and *BOXCAR BERTHA*, she emits a tremendous earthy sexual presence and she's well accompanied here even by "John Boy" Thomas. Would make a good double bill with *DEEP END*.

DANCE OF THE DAMNED (1988). Pale but svelte stripper Starr Andreef is on the verge of suicide, unable to see her son on his birthday. She is "chosen" by vampire Cyril O'Reilly (who must have the worst haircut in vampire cinema history) who wants to know what it's like to see the sun; son/sun, geddit? After some opening striptease numbers which could almost be outtakes from director Katt Shea Ruben's earlier *STRIPPED TO KILL*, this becomes lit-



erally a two-handed talk piece between two characters who wouldn't be missed by anyone if they vanished off the face of the earth. Ruben's take on vampire folk lore allows her to use plenty of slo-mo effects and colour filters, while she continues her obvious interest in the visual aesthetics and psychological aspects of stripping [she visited a lot of strip clubs for research for her films]. A virtually carbon-copy remake, *TO SLEEP WITH A VAMPIRE*, appeared in 1993, which like the original was made by Roger Corman's Concorde.

BETRAYED [a.k.a. When Strangers Marry] (1944). Kim Hunter arrives in NYC to meet her husband of only a month, Dean Jagger. Instead she only finds former beau Robert Mitchum, who helps her look for Jagger. When she finally tracks him down he's using an alias and keeps the shutter down, behavior which leads Hunter to believe he might be the Silk Stocking Killer. Nevertheless, she helps him elude the police and with the aid of Detective Neil Hamilton (Commissioner Gordon from the *BATMAN* TV series) finds the guilty party. This Monogram pic has William Castle (in his pre-horror period) using shadowy low-key lighting more to disguise the budget than for atmosphere but, along with Mitchum's presence, gives the film a noirish feel. There are a couple of memorable moments with Hunter (following her role in *THE SEVENTH VICTIM*) taking a Lewtonesque "walk" and a scene where Hunter and Jagger hide out in a Harlem bar where they're the only white faces!

HOUSE OF MYSTERY (1961). House-hunting couple come across a bargain priced cottage, but the woman who greets them tells them a story about why the place is empty. The previous occupants (Nanette Newman and Maurice Kauffman) were haunted by strange happenings (and are forced to bring in a psychic investigator) including the appearance of a man (Peter Dyneley) who electrocuted—in an elaborate fashion—his murderous wife and her lover, and then committed suicide (events which are revealed during a seance lending the film an elaborate multi-flashback structure). Directed by Vernon Sewell in an understated and subtle manner (especially considering he would later helm the likes of *BLOOD BEAST TERROR* with its giant moth!) this plays like a low budget, no frills (it runs under an hour) British equivalent of *THE HAUNTING* (made 2 years later). The acting is good, Dyneley's murder plan is clever (the sort of thing used to crop up in the like of *THE AVENGERS*), and there's a satisfying if not entirely unexpected coda.

KEITH BEARDEN; Seattle, WA.

WHITE OF THE EYE (1987). Donald Cammell only directs a film about once every 10 years, but they're worth waiting for. *DEMON SEED* is the most unnerving science fiction film ever made, and *WHITE OF THE EYE*, his take on the serial killer phenomenon, is scarier than *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS*, and perhaps the best chiller of the '80s. Argento fans go crazy for his murderous set pieces and imaginative camerawork, and Cammell does just as well. Although

unlike the eye-talian auteur, his movies have good scripts, good acting and actually make sense.

CRAZY MAMA (1975). Not as good as *MELVIN AND HOWARD* (his best film), but making art house hits like *SOMETHING WILD* look like the high gloss home movies they are, Jonathan Demme's *CRAZY MAMA* explores a different side of the American Dream of the 1950's. After their hair salon is closed down by corrupt bankers, three generations of women (Ann Southern, Cloris Leachman and Linda Purl) go on a cross country crime spree. Along the way they pick up a greaser (Bryan England), an old bitty (Merie Earle), an embezzling sheriff (Stuart Whitman), Jim Backus, and *HAPPY DAYS'* Donny Most. Kind of a *THELMA & LOUISE* with laughs and minus the heavy-handed feminist angle, it's got great acting all-around, beautiful locations, and some of the best use of '50s music ever. Try to forget

Santo & Johnny's "Sleepwalk" playing as Purl explores Las Vegas, or Nervous Nervous warbling "Transfusion" as they shoot up a motorcross racetrack. Perfectly edited by Demme and Lewis (*ALLIGATOR*) Teague.

WHEN NATURE CALLS (1985). *MOTHER'S DAY* was one of the prime targets in the early '80s "women-in-peril" critical witch hunts, but what do-gooder yuppie film crits never understood was that the film was very much a parody of media violence and the slasher film cycle. In his follow up, writer/director Charles Kaufman let there be no doubt as to his intention. Ostensibly a *WILDERNESS FAMILY* parody with added vignettes, *WHEN NATURE CALLS* plays its humor so lowbrow and obvious it makes the Zucker Bros. look like Oscar Wilde. Even weirder—it works! It gets the laughs one after another, and it's a shame the Troma Team shitmeisters ignored perhaps their best release, leaving former Bob Hope gag writer Kaufman's career more lost in the woods than any cast member here.

SHORT EYES (1977). People should stop trying to make the definitive prison drama, because this is it. Originally a play by Miguel Pinero (a former inmate himself), *SHORT EYES* (prison-speak for child molester) is a raw, claustrophobic 90 minutes with-

out heroes, plot twists or happy anything. Everyone spends the whole movie on edge, watching their back, wondering when saying or doing the wrong thing at the wrong time will turn their fellow animals against them, and it'll be their turn to get raped or killed. Can you name another film that dares to get inside the head of a pedophile (played by *LONGTIME COMPANION*'s Bruce Davison), and actually makes you feel sorry for him? With a cast of unknowns, cameos by Curtis (*SUPERFLY*) Mayfield and refried country legend Freddy Fender (as in "Hey Bartender, play some..."), and sets courtesy the New York City House of Detention, this film deserves a revival.

THE LOVELESS (1983). This is it—the world's only existential biker flick. Nothing much happens, but with its beat dialogue and boss tunes by retro-rockabilly crooner Robert Gordon on the soundtrack—who needs plot? Some great bits: before seducing a local femme,

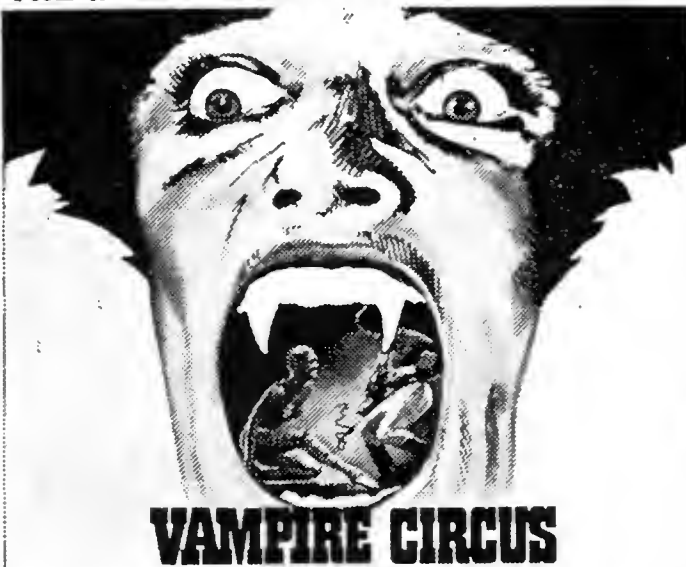


'50s biker Willem Dafoe oozes in the voiceover, "I'm a regular Joe—got an itch between my legs and an afternoon for a heart"; when co-star Gordon can't get served in a roadside eatery, he snaps, "Where's the local talent? I need something to chew on and fast!"; and a static interior shot of said diner lingers for the full 3 minutes required to let Brenda Lee's "I Want To Be Wanted" play out on the soundtrack. Bonus points to director Kathryn Bigelow for intercutting TV footage of race riots during a sex scene.

K.B. & FREAK SHOW MAN; A TASTE OF BILE, P.O. Box 7150, Waco, TX 76714

RUN AND KILL. Super wild Chinese action. A fat guy runs his mouth in a bar, accidentally contracts a hitman to snuff his wife, which he does. But now he can't pay. While on the run he gets the brother of a mercenary killed and now the mercenary wants to kill the guy's entire family, which he does. He drops grandma out the window and burns his daughter alive. In one unbelievable scene, he grabs up his daughter's charred remains and takes off running. When rounding a corner he smacks her head and it breaks off! Definitely worth a look if you're tired of all the cops and badguys shoot'em stuff. Might be a little disturbing for

THE GREATEST BLOOD-SHOW ON EARTH!



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VAMPIRE CIRCUS ADRIENNE CORRI • LAURENCE PAYNE • THORLEY WALTERS
 JOHN MOULDER-BROWN and ANTHONY CORLAN and starring LYNNE FREDERICK

those with children...

VAMPIRE CIRCUS. Great Hammer vampire flick. The uncut version has nice nudity and violence not in the TV version, which is where I first saw it. Concerns a small town plagued with a virus caused by a curse from a vampire the townsfolk killed. A circus of Gypsies shows up (all vampires) to kill the children of the men that killed the vampire, so he can come back...

THE LAST BLOOD. Violent Japanese action with an explosive ending in a hospital similar to **HARDBOILED**.

THE UNTOLD STORY. Mean spirited Chinese gore about a guy killing his employees when they piss him off, then puts'em in his bar-b-que pork pies, whatever the hell those are. Turns out he killed an entire family to get the restaurant, which is shown, and the camera never

flinches when he slaughters two adults and three children. Very nice. The comedic police squad is a little annoying, with Danny Lee as a police chief that brings a new hooker to work with him every day. **SLAVE SEX VOL. 24.** Incredibly intense German S&M. Girl gets tortured, covered in wax, weights on her vagina, and finally beaten with a cane. Doesn't look totally consensual. In the end she's rewarded with piss from her Dominatrix. Very heavy...

[EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS cont.] crammed into the same tiny, one-bedroom apartment that I used to bitch about. But to my surprise, the place doesn't seem like the same shithole it used to be (even though the certifiably-nuts downstairs neighbors keep screaming in Spanish during the wee hours). At least I can still complain about the rest of New York City, especially the ever-more-trendy East Village. Despite a heavy dose of poseur-itis, most of the long-term residents are a fine collection of cultural deviants. Instead, it's the ever-scummier visitors who really get on your nerves, such as the snotty Eurotrash tourists and slumming New Jersoids, who treat the place like one big open toilet. Let's not forget the Wonder Bread junkies who all talk incessantly about becoming the next Jim Carroll—but instead spend their days scoring bags of 5th rate dope, stumbling home and nodding off in front of the TV. Most pathetic of all are the summertime slackers, those endearing teen panhandlers who waste their summer vacations squatting on street corners, piercing every possible body hole, and exhibiting their free-living independence by forgetting to bath and begging for beer & cigs. It's no surprise I need to get the hell out of this cesspool every so often in order to get my sanity realigned. In our case, that meant traveling to the city of rampant alcoholism, New Orleans! And for our first excursion to The Big Sleazy, Anna and I decided to take the high road by booking a room in a wayyy-too-expensive hotel just off the French Quarter, so we could drink our fill, suck the lungs outta crawfish, and easily wander back to our king-sized bed. And despite the occasional moment of Severe Weirdness (while visiting a nearby cemetery, a fat-assed groundskeeper warned us about the "gangs of A.I.D.'s infected negroes, who'll kill me and have their way with that pretty li'l woman"—of course, he also offered to show us where "Henry Fonda" filmed **EASY RIDER**), the city is a total mindtrip of redneck, alcoholic indulgence. At its center is the

famed tourist sinkhole of Bourbon Street, surrounded by a southern urban nightmare of rundown mansions, rampant racism (gotta love those Mammy statues in every shop window), and streets filled with the lowest form of visiting human flotsam—each sucking at some virulent form of street-side Hurricane. [Informational note: A Hurricane is the local tourist beverage, concocted to keep visitors drunk as a Frenchman and constantly dipping into their childrens' college fund. A cheap 'n' hideous mix of rum and cancerous red food coloring that stains your tongue for a fortnight and leaves you curled in the gutter like a dog who just swallowed a kosher dill, if you're stupid enough to chug more than two. My favorite encounter was when I ordered one at a curbside vendor, he opened a nearby kitchen spigot and the vile liquid poured out into my cup. Yum!] If you couldn't already guess, we can't wait to make a return engagement.

But as this editorial winds down, the biggest question for the future is: What direction should **SHOCK CINEMA** take? You're presently holding in your dirty li'l hands a true labor of love, with over 90% written by your exhausted editor. And it's such a shitpile of work that I've often considered tossing in the towel (only to have another beer and realize that I love publishing the damned thing). But now that my real life is finally taking a direction, I might be cutting back the size of the next issue—and therefore, getting it out before the Fall of '96 (and that way, all the new releases won't be a full year old by the time the mag hits the newstands). My dream would be to get this out on a quarterly basis, but then again, little things like a day job, rent and food tend to get in the way of that li'l fantasy... So keep the letters coming in, and if you'd like to trade videos, send me a list of what you've got (only the most obscure collectors need apply) and I'll get back in touch. Until next time, stay sane and keep cool. 6/13/95

Shock Cinema's Four Star Favorites

In the last issue, I gave readers a rundown of some of my all-time favorite films—the type of flicks that make you think “Shit. All movies don’t suck after all!” Well, the reaction to my first collection was so positive that I pulled together another batch of lowbrow faves. And even if some of them don’t have the pure, cockeyed genius of *HEAD*, *A BUCKET OF BLOOD* or *THE HOLY MOUNTAIN*, they’re all twisted fun and worth a look.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF ALFREDO GARCIA (1974). While everyone is singing the praises for Sam Peckinpah’s newly-restored *THE WILD BUNCH*, this gets my vote for the movie they *should’ve* reissued—one of the few projects where Bloody Sam had creative control. This South-of-the-Border bloodbath features constant double crosses from a cast of lying, greedy, sweaty dirtbags. Plus another mind-roasting performance by Warren “God” Oates as Benny, who’s out to earn a million dollar bounty by lugging Alfredo’s severed head around in a bloody, fly-beset sack. A Sleazebag Epic as rancid and foul as the title head, with a pitch-black poetry only Peckinpah could discover amidst all its death, deception and human chaos.

THE AWAKENING OF THE BEAST (1969). Jose Mojica Marins has been cranking out his South of the Border horror pics since the ‘60s, becoming a cross between Luis Bunuel and H.G. Lewis. This self-reflexive gem sets out to prove that drugs “stimulate perversity”, with Marins playing that top-hatted ghoul Coffin Joe, as well as himself, a director besieged by critics for his violent imagery. It begins with several b&w nudie-roughie vignettes, showcasing pretty young gals smoking grass, shooting up, stripping, and becoming crazed sex maniacs (this is a problem?). Add bizarre sojourns with Marins defending his movies; then end it with an L.S.D. experiment, as volunteers dose up, endure rapid-fire hallucinations and are tormented by Coffin Joe. Marins expertly meshes fiction and reality, then whips it into a garish freak-out featuring some of the silliest trip sequences of all time!

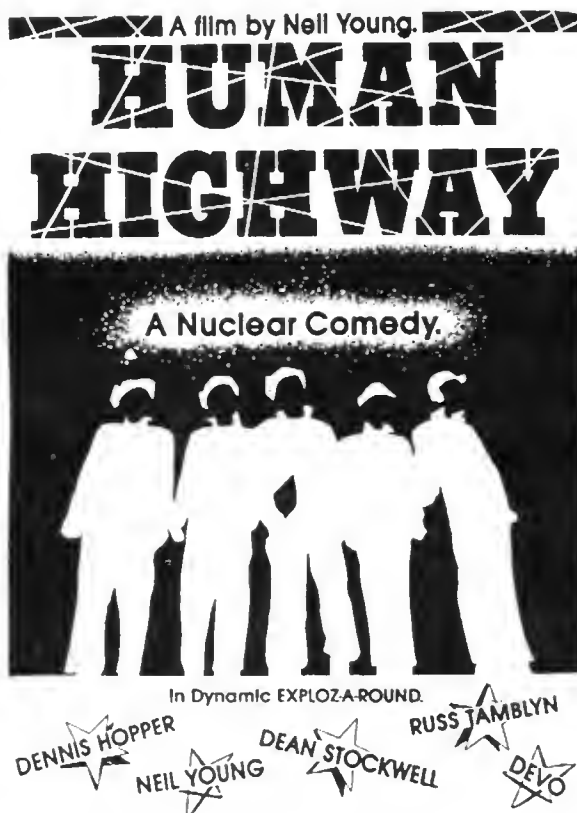
HUMAN HIGHWAY (1981). One day, director/star Neil Young and a bunch of his equally stoned pals stumbled into the desert with a camera, and emerged with this mess. Part fantasy, part slapstick comedy, part concert film, and all so wrongheaded that I love it! Most of the film is set at a roadside diner near a leaky nuclear power plant, with Dennis Hopper as the cook, Dean Stockwell as the new owner, Russ Tamblyn as a dim gas pump attendant, and Devo as glowing nuke workers. Neil himself gets the biggest laughs mugging like a reject from *HEE HAW*. As for a plot? Your guess is as good as mine. But you’ll definitely dig all the mutant-age moments, like the wild “It Takes a Worried Man” musical number featuring the entire cast dancing with shovels! It’s no wonder this nuclear comedy was never released.

THE FINAL PROGRAMME [a.k.a. The Last Days of Man on Earth] (1975). After his PHIBES duet, director Robert Fuest moved onto this psychedelic sci-fi based on Michael Moorcock, which looks like *BUCKAROO BANZAI* by way of Ken Russell. Set in the near future, we follow the globehopping adventures of playboy/scientist/pharmaceutical king Jerry Cornelius (Jon Finch), who’s in search of his kidnapped sister and stolen microfilm that will take mankind to a new evolutionary plateau. The story is a mess, but the cast is colorful (particularly Jenny Runacre as a femme fatale who goes through lovers like Dom DeLuise goes through cheeseburgers) and the production design is a hallucinogenic high. A tripped-out vision with a hero as drunk as the viewer should be while watching it.

BATMAN (1966). No, *not* the bazillion dollar Tim Burton cash cow, but the hilariously stupid feature that was slapped together while the ‘60s TV show was on summer hiatus, starring Adam West and Burt Ward (“The Has-Been Award of 1995 goes to...Gosh, it’s a tie!”). WATCH the Dynamic Duo battle Hollywood’s hammiest character actors! WITNESS the United Nations turned into lumps of dirt! LAUGH as everyone’s career takes a nosedive into showbiz oblivion! Holy Bat Guano! It’s Batman, America’s #1 man-on-the-ego, with

more chintzy, plastic gadgets than any single TV episode could possibly afford, battling Penguin, Joker, Riddler, and Catwoman (cleverly posing as a purr-miscuous reporter from The Moscow Bugle)...Will these pudgy Caped Cadavers save Gotham City from this scummy crowd of Special Guest Villains? Will everybody involved be standing in the same Unemployment Line a year from now? Or will Adam and Burt move onto cable fodder like *YOUNG LADY CHATTERLEY 2* and *BEACH BABES FROM BEYOND*? The answer: “All of the Above”.

COONSKIN (1975). Ralph Bakshi’s third feature is a vicious urban epic that makes his earlier *FRITZ THE CAT* look like *The Smurfs*. Lamely-retitled *STREETFIGHT* for home video, this is a savage rethinking of Disney’s putrid *SONG OF THE SOUTH* and the ol’ Uncle Remus stories—containing some the nastiest images ever put onto animated film. Everybody gets pissed on, whether it’s our Harlem ‘heroes’, Brother Rabbit, Brother Bear and Preacher Fox, or the supporting cast of junkies, whores, pimps, crooked cops, grotesque mobsters, and fatcat



ministers. Bakshi ain't subtle (Miss America is a beautiful red, white and blue whore) and he pours on the hardcore violence with an unflinching glee. A demented indictment of greed, racism, corruption, and all the other cornerstones of our American society.

BLACK CAESAR and **HELL UP IN HARLEM** (1973). Blaxploitation doesn't come any better than this pair of Larry Cohen grindhouse classics, charting the murderous misadventures of Tommy Gibbs, as he rises from shoeshine boy to mob kingpin by killing all his old white bosses. And Fred "The Hammer" Williamson was born to play this macho role, strutting his stuff like he could hit out-of-the-park homers with his dick. **CAESAR** is a Harlem version of the old '30s gangster pics, overflowing with clichéd melodrama. But Cohen pushes all the right buttons and kicks ass during a dizzying climax, as Williamson runs from torpedoes thru midtown Manhattan with a hole blown in his gut! **HARLEM**, tossed together after **CAESAR**'s unexpected success, is pure cinematic adrenalin that tosses all logic in the toilet (Fred even gets to play Frogman!). Copied, but never equalled, this pair set the tone for years of 42nd street triple bills to come.

DESPERATE TEENAGE LOVEDOLLS (1984). This underground gem follows a trio of pre-riot grrls on their 8mm road to rock 'n' roll stardom. After killing the leader's mom, The Lovedolls steal some instruments, find a sleazeball agent, and a month later they've got the #1 hit in the nation and cash flowing out of every orifice. Though crude as hell, this hour-long video is crammed with enough weirdness to make it a seminal indie effort. On a purely technical level, director David Markey (Sonic Youth's 1991: **THE YEAR PUNK BROKE**) makes Herschell Gordon Lewis look like Kubrick, but accept the fact this was lensed on a four-dollar budget, and enjoy its raunchy, urgent edge. Featuring music by Redd Kross and Black Flag, and followed by the even more raucous **LOVEDOLLS SUPERSTAR**.

THE HILLS HAVE EYES (1979). Wes Craven keeps cranking out pics, but has yet to recapture the early magic of this savage geek-fest. When an Average American Family (Mom, Dad, kids, dog, all with the combined I.Q. of a meatloaf) is stranded in the desert, they encounter a very different family—brain-damaged, cannibalistic mutants who want to kill the men, rape the women and eat the baby. The gore is restrained, and our satisfaction comes from the sight of clean-cut suburbanites turning into a pack of drooling killers. This is the ultimate Family Feud, with guns, knives, pointed sticks, and rotten teeth—and if Richard Dawson ever showed his fat face they'd nail his dick to a rock just to watch him squeal. Laff a minute carnage featuring Michael Berryman as the ultimate bug-eyed bald psycho.

NIGHT WARNING (1982). From its cheesy veneer, you'd probably peg this as yet another no-budget slasher-rama, but Susan Tyrell's psychotic, white trash performance (on par with her work in **FORBIDDEN ZONE**) makes this a hoot. Looking like she escaped from a Bellevue production of **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?**, Tyrell plays teenage Jimmy McNichol's over-protective aunt, who's perpetually on the verge of raping the poor kid. But when Jimmy becomes old enough to move out and screw his perky blonde

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girlfriend (Julia Duffy), his independence sets Tyrell on a murder spree. A twisted subplot involves homophobic Police-Ox Bo Svenson, who thinks Jimmy is queer and committed the murders himself. Bluntly directed by William Asher, who should've been castrated years earlier for fouling drive-ins with his Annette & Frankie Beach Party abominations.

HAVING A WILD WEEKEND [a.k.a **Catch Us If You Can**] (1965). Before turning to far-out fare like **EXCALIBUR** and **ZARDOZ**, John Boorman's first project was this frantic, pop music/comedy which followed in the wake of The Beatles' celluloid success. The (Dreary) Dave Clark Five was hired on to star, but Boorman took the bolder route of lacing the groovy shenanigans with a razored cynicism that makes it feel like

a Mike Leigh adaptation of **A HARD DAY'S NIGHT**. The interchangeable quintet star as professional "stunt boys", with Barbara Ferris as a supermodel who ditches her job to tour London with lead singer Dave Clark. A hit-and-miss endeavor (it would've helped to have hired a band with more than one hit tune), but when Boorman connects, he meshes high style and a deft skewering of that entire groovy era. A surprisingly caustic glimpse into the underbelly of the mod generation, as well as a film too honest for its own good.

The Dave Clark Five are "Having a Wild Weekend"



...and on the sound track ... 8 wild songs!

MAN ON A SWING (1974). I was just a kid when I first saw this police thriller, and it creeped the hell out of me. Now realizing that it was directed by Frank Perry, behind such equally eccentric pics as **THE SWIMMER**, **LAST SUMMER** and **RANCHO DELUXE**, I'm not surprised. Based on a true story, Cliff Robertson is a small town cop obsessed with the murder of a local girl and Joel Grey is Franklin Wills, a clairvoyant who's hooked into the case a little too deep—until the cops begin suspecting Wills of the crime. The film initially works its way under your skin with its stark style, then transforms into a

psychological study which continually bolts from viewer expectation. Backed by unusually unsympathetic performances (Cliff and Joel are both pretty slimy), it's no surprise Paramount dumped the thing.

BEAT GIRL [a.k.a. WILD FOR KICKS] (1960). Terrific British juvenile delinquent trash, filmed with a grimy, tough-as-nails energy that puts comparable U.S. flicks to shame. Gillian Hills stars as Jennifer, a pissed-off teen whose Dad spends more time with his French floozy bride than with her. The answer? Hang out with the lowlife Beatniks, go for joyrides, and dance your ass off in their "underground cellars and caves". Unfortunately, this blonde dish also gets involved with strip clubs and murder. Ignore all the curdled family melodrama, because this rebellious gem perfectly captures the swinging Beat milieu, complete with dingy locales, wild slang, and appearances by rocker Adam Faith as the local heartthrob, Christopher Lee as a strip club owner and a pre-stardom (not to mention, pre-liver damaged) Oliver Reed as a supporting social outcast. One of the coolest, dingiest flicks ever made about the London scene.

THE BRAINIAC (1961). Mexploitation at its seedy best, and so ridiculous you'll choke on your cheap beer. It kicks off when a 17th century necromancer is burnt at the stake and vows to kill all the descendents of his badly-dubbed inquisitors. Sure enough, the guy returns to Earth (via a comet) 300 years later in the form of a rubbery, claw-handed monster with an 18-inch-tongue that can suck the brains outta his victim through a pair of holes bored in the back of their neck. Oh yeah, he also has chameleon-like powers, which enables him to crash society events and make out with exotic babes. Believe it or not, even nuttier than it sounds. If you dig this one, check out **DOCTOR OF DOOM**, which adds female pro-wrestling into the stew.

MS. 45 (1981). Abel Ferrara is riding high after **BAD LIEUTENANT** and his upcoming **THE ADDICTION**, but you shouldn't forget this early perverse masterwork, which mixes an urban vigilante pic with a **REPULSION**-style portrait of madness. Zoe Tamerlis stars as a mute young woman who's raped *twice* in one day and goes over the edge—killing her second assailant, chopping up the body and storing it in her fridge. She then hits the streets looking for more Evil Men to waste, even painting herself up like a whore to lure 'em in. This is a seriously disturbed work full of unpredictable twists, with Zoe burning up the screen—the best moment is her Halloween party appearance, dressed as a pistol-packin' nun! As sick and vicious as they come, but with enough style to emerge as an art film for degenerates.

BLOOD ORGY OF THE SHE DEVILS (1973). Without question, director Ted V. Mikels' finest work—but is that *really* much of a compliment? It's a hodgepodge of unfathomable hokum and dime-store visuals that never allows the viewer to stir up any unnecessary braincell activity. Lila Zaborin stars as a witch with too little scruples and too much eye-liner—who supplements her legit Tarot reading income by selling her supernatural services to any wealthy shiteap (such as making a U.N. Ambassador choke to death on a cocktail weenie). But to hell with the plot, because Mikels revels in foreign thugs, witch burnings, hypnotic hallucinations, flaming alters, pounding bongo drums, and (let's not forget) those spear-carrying She Devils. Pathetic hilarity from the man behind **THE DOLL SQUAD**.

BAD TASTE (1987). Peter Jackson hit the big time with **HEAVENLY CREATURES**, and any self-respecting schlock fan has seen **DEAD ALIVE** and **MEET THE FEEBLES** a dozen times. But I have a soft spot (in my head) for his first feature, a dimestore gore 'n' guffaw epic that's best appreciated by folks who prefer watching a guy slipping on manure over Preston Sturges. Enter a world where human-hungry aliens have overrun the countryside, with a few dopes trying to save mankind from certain mastication. It's unrestrained hysteria, complete with gushing wounds, ripped-off limbs, guacamole-style vomit, and boney-buttied aliens. The Kiwi equivalent of *The Road Runner* on P.C.P.—but when *these* guys survive a fall off a cliff, they're left with a mail slot-sized hole in the back of their skulls and their brains continually leaking out. It doesn't get any better.

JONATHAN (1970). This Kraut take on Stoker's *Dracula* is endearing art-sleaze on par with Herzog's **NOSFERATU**. Though filled with trashy horror tidbits like gratuitous sex and dead nuns, director Hans Geissendorfer's main objective is a two-ton metaphor about those evil Nazis and man's undying capacity for evil. Downtrodden 19th century peasants come up with a plan to destroy their fiendish ruling class oppressor, The Count. But first, they enlist boneheaded Jonathan to infiltrate the vampire's clan meetings. And wait until you get a gander at this sinister Count, who's got a hairdo just like ol' Adolph H. himself and barks orders like he just left a touring company of "Springtime for Hitler". A schizophrenic joyride, greatly aided by Robbie Muller's (**BARFLY**, **DOWN BY LAW**) lavish cinematography, which provides the appropriate stench of rural life.



DEADBEAT AT DAWN (1988). Jim Van Bebber's feature debut is a relentless mix of grime, brutality and absurdity that'll take you days to scrub away. Van Bebber himself stars as Goose, a scraggly ex-gang leader whose streak of bad luck begins when his girlfriend is beaten into slop with golf clubs by his old, pissed pals. Later on, his junkie dad goes after him with a butcher knife, his dead squeeze traipses about in her funeral sheet, and Goose is forced to slaughter the entire supporting cast (don't you hate days like that?). Van Bebber gets high marks for abstaining from any socially redeeming elements, relying on hallucinations, supernatural bullshit, copious drug use, and kickass carnage! Crude to the core, true to the streets and utterly disturbing, I've had hangovers that've been more upbeat.

KISS MEETS THE PHANTOM OF THE PARK (1978). The fact that this TV movie is a Hanna/Barbera production should clue you into its wretched charms. Would you believe it's an attempt to turn Kiss into

superheroes on par with Space Ghost, by giving our grease-painted goons Cosmic Talismans and Super Powers? Set at the Magic Mountain amusement park (so they could pad the footage with sweaty, bloated tourists), scientist Anthony Zerbe constructs Evil Kiss Robots that will keep that Evil Rock 'n' Roll Music from the park. This is a field day for low-I.Q.'ed Kiss fanatics, including a look-a-like contest, stage pyrotechnics, concert footage, and Gene Simmons sporting his foot-tall platforms. But any viewer with half a brainstem will be convulsing with laughter from their moronic hijinx. Is it any wonder I love it (for all the wrong reasons)?

HOMICIDAL (1961). William Castle was the God of Schlock Showmen, and along with *THE TINGLER*, this is his best fright flick—relying more on script twists than his later gimmicks. And what a sleazy, kickass intro! A fetching blonde offers a total stranger two grand to marry her, but the second the ceremony's over, she pulls out a knife and stabs the Justice of the Peace in the gut! (That scene alone will keep a smile plastered on your face for the rest of the movie.) Jean Arliss plays the explosive Emily with ballsy glee, who then returns to her day job of caring for the mute, wheelchair-bound Helga, while obsessively keeping Helga's creepy adopted son from any other women. Castle steals a bit from *PSYCHO*, but also has his own evil agenda, including abused childhoods, general man-hating, and a love for fine cutlery. Though saddled with a lame hero (thick-jawed Glenn Corbett), this pic is a gleefully sadistic camp classic.

VIOLENT COP [So No Otoko, Kyobo Ni Tsuki] (1993) and **SONATINE (1994).** Director/actor "Beat" Takeshi Kitano is still relatively unknown in the U.S., but this dazzling crime duet is the perfect intro to his cold and gorgeous filmmaking style. In the first he plays Azuma, a rogue detective who's more ruthless than the criminals. He tosses innocent people down flights of stairs, headbutts a suspect until he turns himself in, and ultimately discovers that a corrupt Vice Squad cop is in league with a drug kingpin—only to resign and get *really* pissed off. In the second, Takeshi goes on the other side of the law, as a world-weary Yakuza named Murakawa. When he's assigned to solve a petty feud in Okinawa, everything imaginable goes wrong. And as we get to know these ill-fated "soldiers", the death toll rises and allegiances fragment. While most action filmmakers go for easy shoot-'em-up thrills, Takeshi prefers a seductive starkness and a cruel sense of humor; and though his average-joe demeanor may peg him as the Ed O'Neill of the Orient, his films are uncompromising meditations on violence and honor.

THE HONEYMOON KILLERS (1969). Based on a string of homicides from the '40s, this b&w tale is a brilliantly sordid romp through deception and obsession. Like a mildewed issue of True Crime Magazine come to life, Shirley Stoler and Tony LoBianco star as fat Martha and con man Raymond, who bilk rich old spinsters outta their savings by having latin gigolo LoBianco marrying them, while Stoler poses as his much-too-loving sister. But things get out of hand when Martha's jealousy turns to murder, and the two leads are so creepy and fucked up you feel like a voyeur. Written and directed by first (and only) time filmmaker Leonard Kastle, much of its stark, tabloid style can be credited to Martin Scorsese, who initiated the project. Trashy, brutal and bleak as hell—this love story is a sinkhole of despair.

GHOSTS OF THE CIVIL DEAD (1988). This Aussie prison pic makes *PAPILLON* look like *FANTASY ISLAND*. Based on actual incidents, there's no gloss on this bleak tale, set at a maximum security "containment" facility. And though the inmates are a scurvy bunch of felons and miscreants, the guards are even worse in the way they casually strip the prisoners of their humanity. It's a depressing slice of life, complete with grizzled lifers, gang rapes, terminal boredom, and acres of razor wire. But when the administration goes power-hungry (watch out for those cavity searches!) and begins trucking in full-blown psychos, it leads to self-mutilations, fires, hunger strikes, and a relentless finale. The cast is so realistic you'd

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HOMICIDAL

think they were pulled outta some local lock-up, with Nick Cave (who provided some music and co-scripted) a stand-out in his small role as a four-star nutcase. A heavy duty pic, steeped in sleaze and rage. **BEYOND THE DOORS [a.k.a. Down On Us] (1984).** Not just the finest Larry Buchanan ever made (better than *MARS NEEDS WOMEN?* I don't believe it!), but one of the most outlandishly tasteless exposes in the annals of cinema. I bet you didn't realize that Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix didn't just die—they were assassinated by the U.S. government in an attempt to "neutralize the three Pied Pipers of rock music". And now we get to see how it *really* went down. To play the three music legends, Buchanan hired people who look absolutely *nothing* like them (at least he got a black guy to play Jimi), and since he didn't have the rights to their original music, Buchanan wrote some new tunes for 'em to sing. Then a trenchcoated hit man slips them deadly drugs, making it look like they all O.D.'ed. On a technical level, my mom could make a better movie, but it's all so transcendently godawful you'll shit blood from laughing so hard. **MY BREAKFAST WITH BLASSIE (1983).** Years after his untimely demise, Andy Kaufman is still getting press, with everybody and their barber now praising his innovative "performance art". What they forget to mention is that when the poor guy was alive, almost no one got the joke, because when I first caught this hour-long *BREAKFAST*, it emptied the theatre. Andy was a pure, geek genius, and this is a perfect intro to his acid eccentricity, with Kaufman and ex-wrestling king Freddie Blassie trading anecdotes over a low cuisine breakfast at Sambo's. Depending on your Kaufman Quotient, this (semi)improvised hoot will seem either brilliantly stupid or just plain stupid, as the two mega-egos swap personal hygiene quips. Directed by Linda Lautrec and Johnny Legend, this put-on will fly right over most people's puny minds. It's their loss.

BLACK GESTAPO (1975). This blaxploitation surprise has the required dosage of bloodshed, nudity and anti-social behavior, as well as half a brain. When white hoods take over a black neighborhood, a bunch of righteous brothers named The People's Army comes to the rescue, decked out in red berets and Black Power arm bands. But the militant second-in-command (Charles Robinson, the goofy bailiff from NIGHT COURT) is less interested in community relations than machine gunnings, incinerations and castrations (flushing the unwanted member down the toilet, no less). When they're not goose-stepping through town, they're lounging around their fortified compound with their stable of siliconed babes. Yes, it's the old "Power Corrupts" storyline, but director Lee Frost swaddles his moral with enough rousing, sadistic rubbish to make this a crude must-see.

ROSELAND (1970). One of the most demented sexploitation pics ever made, overflowing with sub-Fellini surrealism, hilarious psychobabble and some of the homeliest leads in sex pic history. Leading to the \$64,000 Question: What the hell was director Fredric Hobbs (ALABAMA'S GHOST) thinking?! E. Kerrigan Prescott stars as a bearded old fart obsessed with stealing porno films, and in between his visits to a shrink, gabbing to a priest and his eventual Loonie Bin stay, we're privy to flashbacks of his spiral into perversity. Highlights include the Busby Berkeley-inspired musical number "You Can't Fuck Around With Love"; a bunch of frolicking nudists constructing a giant, ritualistic penis; and Heironymous Bosch even crawls out from under his bed at one point! Pretentious, inept and jaw-droppingly bizarre—you'll never forget this cock of shit.

THE DEAD NEXT DOOR (1989). Shot on Super 8, this gleeful homage to Romero's Living Dead trilogy is the only decent thing director J.R. Bookwalter has ever lent his debatable talents to. Once again, the world is besieged by the walking dead, with the Zombie Squad struggling to handle the chaos. From the look of it, Bookwalter recruited an entire town to shuffle about in rotted-flesh make-up, and there's oodles of crude grue—including decaps, gaping wounds and the usual gushing arteries. Despite Fan Nerd in-jokes (naming characters after horror directors), they actually pull off some amusing ideas on a piss-ant budget, like a pro-Undead faction of the public, scientists working on a serum for the Zombie Virus, religious fanatics, and a cynical, kickass finale. Plus, you gotta love those brief, guerilla shots of zombies stumbling in front of the Washington Monument and The White House! Best watched after downing a fridge full of beer.

THE CRIPPLED MASTERS (1982). This chopsocky fest isn't for the easily offended. It's the type of movie that'll clear the room and wreck any chance of you getting laid that evening. But it's a field day for twisted kung fu fanatics, with Li Ho and Tang Chu Sing starring as a pair of recent cripples (Ho has his arms hacked off by a vicious warlord, while Sing's legs are burnt into shrivelled sticks by acid). What makes this film disturbing is the fact these guys are actually handicapped, and for the first half we watch 'em tortured, teased and treated like shit. Of course, under the tutelage of a wise old fart, they're taught to work as a team, with the cheers coming fast and furious the moment the once-pissed-on pair begin kicking ass. These guys are incredible, especially when half-pint Sing leaps on Ho's back and they become an unstoppable whirling dervish. Supremely demented.

THE DEADLIEST OF ALL THAT
VIOLENT BREED...THEY'LL
TURN YOUR TOWN INTO
AN ARENA OF TERROR
One for each of the Deadly Sins...



THE SAVAGE SEVEN (1968). Director Richard Rush's career is a mess. He began with top notch '60s trash like PSYCH-OUT; spent almost decade getting THE STUNTMAN made; and is now cranking out sub-DePalma rip-offs like COLOR OF NIGHT. Well, this SAVAGE flick is a testament to Rush's style and Laszlo Kovacs' vigorous lensing, which turns a generic yarn into a solid bikerama that has Adam Roarke and his drunken boys playing Robin Hood after encountering a bunch of victimized American Indians. Well-choreographed head-bashing and hard-hitting dialogue like "Hey man! You just barfed on my broad!" highlight this romp, with Rush sneaking in a little subtext about man's inhumanity to man and a cameo by a pre-Laverne Penny Marshall as biker squeeze Tina.

SWEET MOVIE (1975). Dusan Makavejev is a certifiable madman. Embraced by arthouse critics for lobster epics like WR: MYSTERIES OF THE ORGANISM, this crazed Yugoslavian is the Eastern Bloc's answer to Jodorowsky, mixing lumbering politics with sexual silliness.

And while exiled in Canada, he cranked out this highly erotic, absurdist satire that celebrates sex, food and life in all its most deviant forms. When Dusan isn't sledgehammering us with revolutionary rhetoric about the fall of socialism (Zzzz), the good parts involve lovely Carol Laure's perverse antics---from her marriage to Texas bazillionaire John Vemon and his gold-plated dick, to a steamy masturbation scene while coated in chocolate. Laced with flesh, piss, vomit and anti-social behavior, it doesn't make a lick of sense most of the time, but confirms Dusan's whacko status.

BLUE SUNSHINE (1978). Want a wild premise? This horror yarn begins when several upstanding townsfolk suddenly lose their hair by the handful and go on blood-thirsty rampages. The link? They all attended college together in the



'60s, all tried a new form of L.S.D. called Blue Sunshine, and ten years later, are turning into psychotic cueballs. In more assured hands, this Acid Paranoia nightmare could've been a brilliant, horror variation of *THE BIG CHILL*, but director Jeff Lieberman lets it go slack too often. Nevertheless, he does a good job despite his sad budget, while avoiding cheap gore in favor of a pervading creepiness. The cast of never-wases includes Zalman King (future softcore-auteur behind *TWO MOON JUNCTION* and *RED SHOE DIARIES*) as our dubious hero, and a post-*LOST IN SPACE* Mark Goddard as a dirtbag politician.

CORRUPT [a.k.a. Copkiller] (1983). On the surface, this routine potboiler pits a corrupt N.Y.C. police lieutenant against a weirdo punk who might (or might not) be a wanted cop killer. So why check it out? Because it stars Harvey Keitel in a early variation of his *BAD LIEUTENANT* role, and John Lydon (ex-Sex Pistol, Johnny Rotten) as the wiseass who's taken prisoner by Keitel, fed out of a dog bowl and repeatedly beaten to a snotty pulp. Hell, I'd watch an entire movie of these two slobbs just sitting at a table, jabbering at each other ("My Lunch With Lydon"?). Lydon is particularly good, and though you'd expect the guy to puke on the director and stick a coathanger thru a baby's head, his shaded performance perfectly match's Keitel's usual hysterics. Too bad just about everything else in the movie reeks.

CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST (1979). Where would a *SHOCK CINEMA* Best-Of List be without Ruggero Deodato's Italian cannibal gut-sucker? When a crew of journalists mysteriously disappear in the depths of the South American jungle, a search party pieces together their fate, thanks to their crude, handheld film footage. It seems they encountered a tribe of half-naked savages and after chronicling a slew of atrocities (a fetus is ripped from a woman's womb, another woman is staked out in a field with the spike up her ass and out her mouth), the wacky natives finally get sick of having cameras shoved in their faces by the asswipe Americans and end the film with a four-star Entrails Orgy. Its high-fallutin' tone is particularly hilarious in light of the gore-fest they're actually shoveling; and though utterly detestable, it's also a favorite for the truly ill at heart.

IN A GLASS CAGE [Tras El Cristal] (1985). Director Agustin Villaronga's sick-assed drama will best stick in your memory as an oppressive cry of pain in the guise of an art film. Gunter Meisner stars as a Nazi war criminal who experimented on boys during the war, now living safely in Spain. But when he becomes trapped in an iron lung, a mysterious young man is hired as his nurse---and just by coincidence, this kid was (1) violated by the bastard years earlier, and is (2) totally out of his fucking mind. He begins by reading aloud from the Nazi's graphic journals, then moves onto recreating old atrocities with the (unwilling) assistance of local urchins and taking control of the entire household---finally turning the incapacitated swine's dark past back on himself for a savage, revenge-fueled finale. This pedophilia-fueled flick focuses on the true horror at the core of human nature. A shower afterward is optional, but recommended.

CAGED HEAT (1974). Long before anyone could've imagined an Oscar in his future, director Jonathan Demme lensed this savvy women-in-prison epic which sends up the entire silly genre, even as it revels in tits, violence, rape, and assorted trashy antics. All the usual trappings are here, including new fish Erica Gavin and prim, sadistic warden Barbara Steele. But in between their skimpy hot-pants fashions and half-naked catfights, this bizarre romp breaks



outta the usual conventions—including a surreal fantasy sequence, electroshock treatments from a sex-crazed Doc, and a refreshingly feminist tone (just so long as those feminists don't mind taking showers every half hour). This sluts-in-the-slammer pic even features some honest to goodness *acting*, imaginative photography from the consummate Tak Fujimoto and a weird-assed soundtrack by John Cale.

HOME MOVIES (1979). Back in my younger days, when Brian DePalma could do no wrong (was I an idiot, or what?), I was one of the seven moviegoers in the country who laid out hard cash to see this screwball comedy. Filmed during a teaching gig at Sarah Lawrence, DePalma returned to his low-budget roots with this overdose of obscure in-jokes and slumming Hollywood pals, starring Keith Gordon as Denis Byrd, a teenager

grappling with his dysfunctional family. Dad is cheating on Mom. Mom is continually threatening to commit suicide. And older brother Gerrit Graham is planning to wed a reformed bimbo (Mrs. DePalma herself, Nancy Allen), who Denis yearns to do the bonedance with. Let's not forget Kirk Douglas' overwrought antics as a college prof chronicling Denis' pathetic life. Sounds silly? You bet. Besides, what other film can boast of gags about bikers, health food, voyeurism, and even a live sex act with a rabbit? A severely guilty pleasure.



MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH (1976). On the surface, this looks like another empty-headed teen romp, especially when you spot Andrew Stevens and Robert Carradine in the credits. But give it a chance. A quartet of wealthy jocks keep the nerdy students of a 'typical' high school terrorized, until a creepy new kid (Derrel Maury) is crippled by their Gestapo-like tactics and systematically murders the neanderthals. In addition to the cool revenge plot (complete with bloody demises and hideous '70s fashions), director Renee Daalder sneaks in a radical allegory about the abuse of power and the corruption of revolutionary ideals. You see, the moment the school misfits are empowered, they turn into as big a bunch of jerks as the original leaders—that is, until Maury gets his hands on 'em. Though ripe with drive-in level acting, this is sleazy, smart and subversive fun.

FILM REVIEWS

PIT STOP [a.k.a. The Winner] (1967). Director Jack Hill is a long-time SHOCK CINEMA favorite, and although this pic might not have the deranged genius of *FOXY BROWN*, *SWITCHBLADE SISTERS* or *SPIDER BABY*, it's another example of how Hill could resuscitate a timeworn drive-in genre with his unerring eye for tough, manic melodrama. Though a late entry in the race car/greaser sweepstakes, this pic is as cool as they come, with tough-talkin', bad ass hot rodders, gorgeous cars and a kooky opening featuring a street race that ends with one of the racers smashing the front of a suburban home *clean in*. Dick Davalos stars as hot headed drag racer Rick Bowman, who's bailed out of the slammer by a businessman (Brian Donlevy) who plans on making Rick his newest pro stock car racer. The twist? This is Figure-8 racing, with an intersection in the middle of the track that can turn the competition into a high speed bumper car ride. Rick is a hot head at first, but learns his lesson after a couple crashes and some Yoda-like advice from an old codger who hangs out at the track. The basic plot is old hat, but Hill keeps it gritty with beautifully-shot real-life race footage, twisted metal, wild spin-outs and screaming pinhead crowds. And let's not forget the ever-popular Sid Haig as Hawk Sidney, the meanest shitheap at the track. Sid has made a career out of playing full-tilt psychos and this is no exception, with Haig going nuts after Rick trashes his shiny new jalopy on the track. In the pic's highlight, Sid ambushes Bowman during a date, gives the guy a concussion, and then proceeds to chop up Rick's car with a handy axe (with his babe still inside, no less!). Almost as wild are the copious party scenes at the local bar, with Sid boogieing on tabletops like a HULLA-BALOO reject. As for the distaff side of the cast, future Oscar bait Ellen McRae (Burstyn) plays the wife of a professional driver who flirts with Rick; and Beverly Washburn (who co-starred with Sid in *SPIDER BABY*) plays a track groupie who likes to guzzle a vat of hooch and sleep with the day's champ. The film almost gets lost amidst convoluted subplots involving race track ringers, a dune buggie party, and (as per tradition) the Big Race where Rick gets to prove himself on the track. But what really makes this a subversive work is the way Hill never lets the dickheaded Rick evolve into your standard, white-bread hero. Instead, he remains a total asshole to the very end, right down to the uncompromising finale. A grim and realistic drive-in bumper.

THE TOUCHABLES (1968). This ultra-groovy British counterculture flick is a four-star blast. A time capsule back to a Mod era long gone, and best viewed with a tongue firmly planted in your cheek. Directed by Robert Freeman, who first came to fame as one of The Beatles' still photographers, this guy definitely knows how to squeeze the maximum grooviness out of a shot. And even though you get the feeling they were taking this nonsense wayyyy too seriously at the time, this outrageous miasma of gangsters, kidnappings, Pop Art furniture, and plastic people stuffed into outlandish fashions tends to grow on you. In fact, it would rank up there with trash epics like *CANDY* and *BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS*, if only the characters weren't so damned stupid and annoying. Judy Huxtable, Esther Anderson, Kathy Simmonds, and Marilyn Rickard star as the title quartet of odd birds who continually straddle that thin line between being (a) four beauties in search of outrageous kicks, or (b) spoiled, vacuous, self-centered brats who should all get run over by a double-decker bus. They drive around town with a stolen wax statue of Michael Caine, bounce about in mini-skirts, pull childish pranks, and kidnap a Beatle-coiffed pop singer named Christian

(who doesn't exactly put up a struggle when abducted by the cuties... Would you?). Then they all crash inside a huge, clear sphere in the middle of the countryside for much of the movie, playing pinball, rolling about together and looking fabulous. Yet even though they're trapped in the middle of nowhere, these kids somehow manage to find new designer threads every two minutes. And I swear, they must be chopping in the eye liner by the crateful. If this doesn't sound like a total, incoherent crock so far, wait until you get wind of the wrestling subplots, including a black wrestler/mob collector named Mr. Lillywhite who has a hard-on for the missing Christian, and another bruiser who dances ballet in the ring while thrashing his opponents. Though never as ribald as one could hope, this supremely silly garbage is worth a look for the gaudy furniture alone, which consists of a cool carousel bed, piles of mauve pillows, huge keyholes, and mirrored floors. At times this lark almost has the look of an *AVENGERS* episode as directed by Ken Russell, with its eye-popping visuals and mind-blown script by David and Donald Cammell (*PERFORMANCE*, *WHITE OF THE EYE*) generating plenty of present-day laughs at the expense of our hideously pretentious past.



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PAGANINI (1989). Any self-respecting fan of Euro-trash cinema knows that Klaus Kinski was one of the major figures throughout the '60s and '70s. His ugly puss popped up in everything from horror pics, spaghetti westerns, softcore sex romps, as well as Werner Herzog's best known arthouse epics. And even though the guy worked for anyone who could spell his name correctly on a cashier's check, once on-screen, Kinski was always terrific and charismatic (even in his most foul chunks of shit). But before passing away, Kinski had the opportunity to direct and star in this dream project, featuring a script he'd spent years slaving over. It's no real surprise the finished film was barely released, because once he got the green light, Klaus went totally nuts. The result is a heartfelt, but barely-baked costume drama that crams the entire life of Nicolo Paganini into only 80 minutes, resembling nothing less than a Cliff Notes biography written while on P.C.P. The movie views Paganini as the first music superstar, whose electrifying performances send the ladies into spasms of sexual ecstasy (right down to rubbing their crotches in the middle of his solos). But despite his adoring fans, Paganini was an unlikable creep off-stage, with a tortured soul and a crippled body. It's obvious Klaus felt a kindred spirit there—whether it's Nicolo's self-proclaimed genius, or his unending line of raunchy affairs with minors—and Klaus looks great (as usual), with his freshly-dyed, scraggly black hair hanging over his face, and perpetual scowl. Any other filmmaker might've turned this tale into a Merchant-Ivory style bore, but with Kinski in control, watch out! Subtlety was never one of Klaus' strong points as an actor, but as a director he doesn't even know the meaning of the word, handing us a spectacularly indulgent rollercoaster ride of sex, gloom, desire, and gorgeous wall-to-wall music. The camera never rests, spinning about like the cinematographer was high on cheap Chablis, while the editor haphazardly cuts between sequences of Klaus screwing one young lass after another. And though an honest to goodness plot threatens to intrude when the Church gets fed up with Paganini's sinful notoriety, it's quickly lost in the face of gratuitous slo-mo, horses graphically fucking, writhing naked women, and (most of all) those teenage groupies continually demanding sex from him (I'm sure those scenes must've been hell for poor Klaus). Kinski looks like he's off his rocker much of the time, strutting about in his black top hat and flowing cape; and his best scene is when Paganini usurps a street urchin's violin and overwhelms passers-by with an impromptu performance. One moment it's sentimental claptrap (especially when Kinski's with his doe-eyed kid), the next it's overwrought (but never coherent) eroticism, and later it plays like a Monty Python parody of bad costume bios. All in all, a brilliant disaster (but then again, what else would you expect when you hand a certifiable madman a loaded camera?).

JOHNNY CASH! THE MAN, HIS WORLD, HIS MUSIC (1969). Just the other day I was lamenting the fact that there was so little Johnny Cash footage from his early years (outside of his glorious title role in *DOOR TO DOOR MANIAC*, of course), when lo and behold, I stumbled across this feature length portrait of everyone's favorite Man in Black. And it's a treat! A film as simple and solid as its subject matter, that lets us experience Cash on-stage and off. The music portions alone are priceless, kicking off with "Ring of Fire" and pock-marked by terrific live versions of "Folsom Prison Blues", "Jackson", "Orange Blossom Special", plus footage from his renowned prison concerts. In addition, Carl Perkins sneaks in a smokin' version of "Blue Suede Shoes", and a thin, scraggly-bearded Bob Dylan turns up in the recording studio for a duet on "One Too Many Mornings". We even get some of Cash's more solemn tunes like his "Ballad of Ira Hayes", played for a first row audience of ceremonial-decked Indians at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Of course, on the down side, The Carter Sisters' incessant yodelling will have any nearby pets hiding under your bed. The rest of the film is an earnest slice-of-life from this craggy superstar, who acts like he's still some backwater

bum from Arkansas and doesn't seem to have a pretentious bone in his whole body. He even returns to his boyhood home (a pathetic white trash shack) and reminisces about his piss poor past. These off-stage portions are also the hardest to sit through—from generic fooling around on his tour bus with June Carter and his entourage; sitting around the house, listening to babbling old farts and ugly, drooling rugrats; hanging around after a concert with fans, who still think indoor plumbing is a luxury; or getting asked for musical advice from every two-bit, 'gee-tar' player in East Stumpfuck, Georgia. Director Robert Elfstrom does a serviceable job of following Cash around and lashing together the footage, but it's probably all too low-tech to appeal to viewers weaned on today's rapid fire rockumentaries. And though too loose and unfocused to ever be a landmark in music flicks, it captures Cash at the height of his popularity a quarter century ago in an easy going, Cinema Verite fashion. Sure, you can bitch that the film doesn't contain much in the way of startling insights into the guy (don't expect any groupies or drugs here, because this is pure, U.S.D.A. approved cheese), it's nevertheless a must see for fans.

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"HONKY TONK"
"LOVE, ME TENDER"
"LOVE, ME TENDER"
"LOVE, ME TENDER"
AND MORE!

"Johnny Cash"

THE MAN
HIS WORLD HIS MUSIC!

Produced by ROBERT ELFSTROM. Edited by LAWRENCE DICK. Screenplay by ARTHUR AND EVELYN BARKER. Produced by ARTHUR AND EVELYN BARKER. Directed by ARTHUR AND EVELYN BARKER.

THE CARTER FAMILY-CARL PERKINS-THE TENNESSEE THREE

ALEXANDER THE GREAT (1964). This abandoned one-hour pilot for a historical television series languished on the shelf for years, until it was aired for one time only in January '68 on ABC. But nowadays, it's a wet dream come true for TV icon watchers! First off, we get soon-to-be Captain Kirk, William Shatner, as Alexander himself, marching his way through Persia on a mission for Greek supremacy. Better still, there's a pre-BATMAN Adam West as Cleander, Alexander's right hand man; while as Karonos, director-in-training John Cassavetes tries to earn enough chump change to buy more film stock for *FACES*. Also on board is an aging Joseph Cotten and Simon Oakland (best known as Kolchak's blustery editor). And if that isn't enough, all of these guys are forced to strut about in mini-skirt-style togas, making this true High Camp indeed. Set three hundred years before the appearance of that over-rated Christ guy, the macho Alexander and his men are continually under attack by the barbaric Persians (hmmm, perhaps because they're invading Persia?), but Alex explains all this militaristic hooey with the simple fact that they're warring in the name of eventual peace (you see, even back then, these military guys were full of shit). But since Cassavetes thinks

Alex's campaign is foolhardy, he goes in cahoots with the enemy and plans a coup, after which all these war-weary soldiers can pack up their bungalows and head home. Sounds suspenseful? Nah! This is interminable stuff with all the pomp and spectacle of a Sunday School Bible movie, and the only fun you can wring out of it nowadays is a quick round of "Spot the Ham". Of course, Shatner wins hands down, proving once again that the severe lack of talent he displayed on T.J. HOOKER was no fluke. The unfortunate director of this televised bowel movement is Phil Karlson, who cranked out good, gritty B-movies in the '50s (KANSAS CITY CONFIDENTIAL, THE PHENIX CITY STORY), only to be stuck in later years with this wretched slop. The desert locales look suspiciously like Utah (you mean they didn't actually fly the cast and crew to the Middle East? Outrageous!) and the badly-matched stock footage tries to cover up the fact there's only about two dozen stuntmen in each massive "army". Slow, cheap and unforgivably pompous, you can understand why this fiasco has never resurfaced, remaining justifiably forgotten to all but the most bored vidots. I'll bet even Adam West was embarrassed.

SON OF DRACULA (1974). This misguided horror/comedy/rock musical is such a half-assed disaster that it's no surprise to learn it was produced by the Beatles-funded Apple Films. And though you might expect a full scale farce with a cast like Harry Nilsson and Ringo Starr, director Freddie Francis tried to make an honest-to-goodness horror movie outta this crap. It seems that Dracula's vampire wife (glimpsed pregnant in her coffin) had a son who grew up to be a very mod Harry Nilsson (second only to DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN's Zandor Vorkov for the Most Idiotic Looking Bloodsucker Award), who rides around modern-day London in the back of a hearse and puts the bite on pretty young birds. So far, this follows the *de rigueur* Hammer route, but all bets are off the second Nilsson nonchalantly creeps into a posh nightclub, climbs on stage and begins belting out a number with the house band. Personally, I thought I was gonna piss my pants! And this flick shifts gears so randomly you'd think the editor had gotten stoned on The Beatles' private stash and accidentally spliced together two entirely different films. Let's not forget poor silly Ringo, who dons a flowing white wig and beard to play the sorcerer Merlin. Shuffling about the set in an old MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR wizard robe, the guy's got nothing to do but act like himself (so what else is new?), while adding a welcome touch of utter confusion to the proceedings. Of course, Nilsson isn't exactly Lugosi either, acting like he's got one eye on the clock and the other on the nearest liquor cabinet. The vague excuse for a plot involves Drac Jr. (here called Count Down) and his upcoming coronation as King of the Netherworld. But first, Nilsson wants to become human so he can experience "love" (gimme a fuckin' break!), so he has his fangs pulled by Van Helsing. Then it all comes to a chaotic head at a gala Monster Ball,

attended by Doc Frankenstein (Freddie Jones), a werewolf and assorted rotting ghouls. Despite all this monster madness, the best bits are Nilsson's musical contributions, including live performances of "At My Front Door", "Daybreak" and "Jump Into the Fire"; plus "Down" and "Remember" (though I could've done without his sappy A.M. radio fave "Without You"). Featuring brief glimpses of Keith Moon, John Bonham and Peter Dinklage in Nilsson's band, the only time Harry looks comfortable is when he's pounding the keyboards with 'em, while sporting his cool Dracula cape. And though this pic tries hard to please, it's never as loopy as it had every right to be.

FRANKENSTEIN 1970 (1958). If you're like me, you were weaned on Boris Karloff's Universal horror romps from the '30s—especially the various off-shoots of Mary Shelley's classic. Well, in the late '50s, when the 70-year-old Karloff's career was on the ebb, he signed onto this lovably schlocky, Allied Artists drive-in treat, which cashed in on Boris' early patchwork roles. It begins when an American TV crew arrives in Germany to film a Frankenstein Anniversary Special at his actual, mildewed castle, which is now the home of the Baron's great-great-grandson (who else, but Boris?). Since Karloff is down to his last Deutschmark, he agrees to appear in the show and reminisce about his nefarious ancestor, with the money from this gig going

toward the final payment on his Walk-In Atomic Reactor. Because if you check under the basement crypt, you'll discover the old guy's secret lab, where (with the aid of the local morgue) Karloff is putting the finishing touches on his bandage-swaddled handiwork (I particularly enjoyed the lay-out of Boris' 'high-tech' lab, which has a garage-sized nuclear reactor sitting next to an everyday kitchen refrigerator). After some reanimation, the creature stumbles about the castle, still head-to-toe in Mummy garb, slowing killing all the annoying show business people (ain't it about time somebody did?). Director Howard W. Koch puts a hokey, modern-day spin on the genre, but it's Karloff who makes this a treat. And unlike poor ol' Lugosi, Boris was still pretty spry in his later years, snarling, hobbling about and looking like he's having a ball (talk about acting!). With a huge, ugly scar running down the left side of his face (thanks to those World War II Nazis—gosh, they get blamed for everything, don't they?), Karloff's suave but sinister role is a model for decades of German villains to come (where do you think Olivier got the inspiration for MARATHON MAN?... Err, maybe not). Meanwhile, Koch brings a welcome sense of humor to the non-Boris sequences, particularly in his depiction of kiss-ass entertainment types—and after directing a full load of forgettable B-movies, Koch would go on to produce THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYST, plus Sinatra's ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS and THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE. Though a tad slow at times (and come to think of it, without much actual horror), this is terrific Late Show silliness, featuring the always-amusing Karloff at his cheesy best.



UNMADE BEDS and **THE BLANK GENERATION** (both 1976). Back in the mid-'70s, director Amos Poe proved that you didn't need any money to make a movie—as long as you had some trendy pals who'd let you aim a camera at them. And though never a household name, his effortless ennui set the tone for an entire era of gritty, no-

budget Transgression to come (though unlike Kern and Zedd, there isn't any sex or death to keep an East Village crowd from nodding off), before Amos moved onto slicker fare like **SUBWAY RIDERS** and **ALPHABET CITY**...His first, **UNMADE BEDS**, is an embellished home movie that proudly wears its love for indulgent, European cinema on its sleeve like a gob of snot. This grainy, b&w semi-feature (barely an hour) begins with title credits printed on t-shirts and worn by a bra-less woman; and though supposedly set in Paris, we all know Poe is just pulling a cheap, N.Y.C.-based, nouvelle vague homage. Duncan Hannah stars as Rico, an angst-filled photographer

with a perpetual pout, and (in a nutshell) after friends and strangers wander about his pad and spout inane dialogue, it all devolves into a beyond-convoluted gangster tale. At least Poe found some cool folks to strut in front of his camera, led by a brief appearance from a young Debbie Harry, who sexily straddles a chair in her lingerie (a la Dietrich) and warbles "Sweet Thing" as Rico takes photos. After awhile, all the French bullshit is hilarious (characters discuss the Arc d'Triumphe while gesturing at the Washington Square arch; and whenever outside, Amos finds backdrops with French names, like "LaFayette Electronics"). Unfortunately, most viewers will find all this style without substance interminable. As for the title? Well, one woman uses it as a half-baked symbol for the only thing worthwhile in life. Unfortunately, the sound was so muddy, I couldn't make out what she was saying, but I have the distinct feeling I didn't miss a thing...On the other hand, **BLANK GENERATION** is (difficult to believe) even more crude, but nevertheless, well worth a look since Poe (with the help

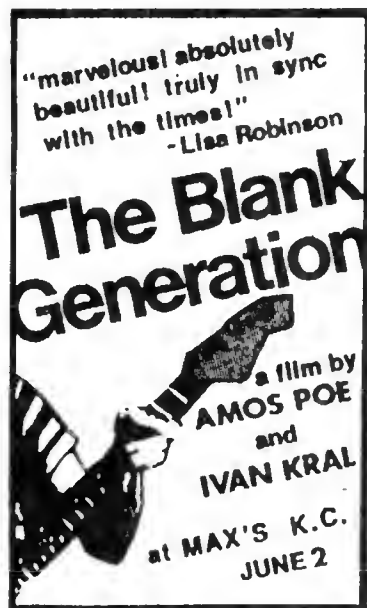
of Patti Smith guitarist Ivan Kral) lashed together live performances from a shitload of underground bands of the '70s. Unfortunately, Poe and Kral captured all this CBGB's chaos non-synch, so they haphazardly tossed in the songs later on. But so what if their lips don't come close to matching the tunes? You don't complain when that happens

in old Godzilla films, do you? We get The Ramones and Talking Heads with soon-to-be hits like "Blitzkrieg pop" and "Psycho Killer". And where else can you see live footage of Television, Patti Smith, the Dolls, and Richard Hell and the Heartbreakers? But the best is from micro-skirted Wayne County doing "Are You a Boy, Or Are You a Girl?" and "Rock 'N' Roll Animal". Totally spastic on a technical level (it seems as if the cameraman was more fucked up than the performers), this is nevertheless essential for its backstage glimpses of all the whacked musicians hanging out together, plus plenty of spontaneous, raw footage that embodies that brief but pivotal moment in rock 'n' roll history.

MAGIC LAND OF MOTHER GOOSE (1967). We're all familiar with the legacy of Herschell Gordon Lewis, the godfather of cinematic carnage. And since we all love H.G.'s work, let's take a look at one of his oddest projects—a cut-rate children's film that's so dirt cheap it makes his other flicks look like Cecil B. DeMille. Plus, since it lacks any of his usual schlock gusto, even hardcore fans will find this a numbing experience. It's hard to believe this movie miscarriage actually played theatres, luring in matinee suckers with its hokey ad campaign, while making other '60s kid drivel (like the ubiquitous **THE CHRISTMAS THAT ALMOST WASN'T**) look halfway watchable. The movie is bookended with a particularly seedy Santa Claus (pull some wino outta the gutter, pry the bottle from his arthritic hand, and paste some cotton onto his face) who's only here so the distributors can get bookings at Christmas time. The rest of its excruciating, 61 minutes features a menagerie of 4th rate Mother Goose characters "magically" coming to life from out of a giant Storybook. But what makes this a total crock is that it's all filmed on a theatrical stage, using two cameras, and the whole endeavor has the look of a bad grade school play, complete with home-sewn costumes. It begins with Old King Cole complaining about how dull his castle is, so Merlin appears to liven the place up with some crusty Amateur Hour magic. In between Merlin's schtick (like the always mystifying Pouring the Pitcher of Milk into the Paper Cone trick), we're further annoyed by

crude musical/comedy bits, including dancers in flannel animal suits, a creepy Raggedy Ann doll (that look more like Disney's Scarecrow of Romney Marsh) and a wicked witch who has the right idea by turning the entire sorry lot into statues. But Merlin quickly defeats her scheme (accompanied by Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries"), while Mother Goose turns up at the very end to scold them all for their mischief. As you can see, this certainly ain't **THE GORE GORE GIRLS**, and I'd bet it took Herschell an entire afternoon to film it. You know, finding a flick like this is great, but actually sitting

through it is another story altogether, especially when it's so utterly barren of entertainment value (unless you're in search of a particularly cruel punishment for unwanted rugrats). A fiasco that gives you the same queasy feeling you'd get if you suddenly discovered Kubrick had secretly directed a **POLICE ACADEMY** movie.



99 AND 44/100% DEAD (1974). Chalk this one up as just another nail in John Frankenheimer's cinematic coffin. Because after directing top notch dementia like *THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE* and *SECONDS* in the '60s, the guy suddenly lost it—turning into a '70s studio whore (albeit an eccentric one) with *BLACK SUNDAY*, *FRENCH CONNECTION II*, and this comic/action misfire, which was mercifully dumped by 20th Century Fox. At least it's an *original* failure, which is more than you can say about most bombs nowadays. Besides how can you resist a movie that kicks off with pop art credits, followed by an underwater tour of a river bed's mob victims? Unfortunately, after this classic shot of soggy, concrete-footed corpses, it's all downhill from there. And though a stylish send-up of gangland thrillers sounds like a crackerjack idea (sort of a film noir spin on Bava's *DANGER DIABOLIK*), nobody has a clue what to do once the cameras roll. Richard Harris (never known for his choice in films, but looking less plastered than usual) stars as Harry Crown, a cool hitman who finds himself in the middle of a war between Uncle Frank (Edmund O'Brien) and Big Eddie (Bradford Dillman). The convoluted script is sprinkled with (supposedly) sure-fire action sequences and two-fisted gun battles, but there's never any heart behind it. And despite some great, blighted urban locales, the characters are dim and the story is dull. Worst still is the casting of Ann Turkel as Buffy, the insipid romantic lead, which also breaks two important Celluloid Commandments: (1) Never hire an ex-fashion model, and (2) don't let Richard Harris' bimbo girlfriends on the set. In fact, Turkel is sooo bland she makes Lauren Hutton look halfway human. But despite its overwhelming Disaster Factor, Frankenheimer pulls off a few cool (all-too-brief) bits, such as Harris' short cut through the sewers, matter-of-factly populated by full-grown alligators; how the mobsters all dress in matching black suits and snap-brim fedoras; plus a cruel little sequence of Harris disarming a motion-sensitive bomb attached to a woman (and with his obvious alcohol tremors, that ain't easy!). High Camp acting honors go to Chuck Connors, who steals the show as Claw Zuckerman, a psycho torpedo with a missing left hand (thanks to a past encounter with Harris) and a trunkful of attachments for his stump—including your basic hook, giant hedge shears, a bottle opener, and even a cat o' nine tails (kinky!). Frankenheimer couldn't make a terrible film if he tried (O.K., maybe his mutant bear movie, *PROPHECY*), but this hodgepodge feels like he was simply jacking off for a quick paycheck.

BEYOND LOVE AND EVIL [La Philosophie dans le Boudoir] (1969). Believe it or not, I think I've found a new favorite in the exhaustive genre of brain-damaged, art/sleaze pics. And Frogland director Jacques Scandolari (*BRIGADE MONDAIN*) must be one deranged fuck in order to rip this tawdry tidbit from his subconscious, which plays like a Bob Guccione production, as directed by Jodorowsky. "With this torch, I proclaim the triumph of Evil over Good," are the first words uttered in this softcore detour into the spiciest niches of sexuality, as our host sets a crucified skeleton on fire. And if you're like me, you won't understand a goddamn thing

that's happening on the screen! A young man intrudes on a sumptuous sex party, populated by refugees from a Fellini acid haze, but this newcomer finds himself welcomed like an old friend. He soon learns that this mansion is a haven from the world's staid reality—with the naked, body-painted guests gratifying every perverse whim as "In A Gadda Da Vida" plays in the background (man, this *is* a groovy place, ain't it?). Here's a partial list of some of the shit Scandolari tosses at

us: Wedding nights are accompanied by a gang bang; bikini-briefed musclemen wander about, guarding the place; a man is used as a bath mat; a nude woman rubs herself with dead fish and a slimy octopus (always a surefire turn-on); and gals are chased through the woods by dogs, only to be captured and happily given to the dungeon-imprisoned Beast Man. But this grotesque field day doesn't stop there! Everybody within camera range is either naked or in the process of dropping their drawers and leaping into bed with some supporting cast member, plus there are chained-up partners, lesbo fondling, food used as a sexual aid, human altars, and rampant voyeurism. You name it, this epic spits it in your face. Yet it's all so godawful artsy that none of this nonsense is ever dirty—just ridiculous as hell! The minimal plot has our upstanding male lead (who's repulsed by all these "animals in heat") trying to win back his lost love, Xenia (Souchka), who's also in attendance, but first he must challenge Yalo, the master of the house. And just when you think this nice, prudish guy has won, Xenia screws over the poor schmuck just in time for a mega-downer, sadomasochistic finale. Wow!! This thing makes *SALO* look like *WILLY WONKA*. Gorgeously lensed, yet (unlike most Euro-sepic snooze-a-thons) so fast-

paced and weird you're never bored, this pic is more pretentious than I could possibly imagine (and that's saying *plenty*). Co-starring Lucas de Chabaneux, Fred Saint-James and a bevy of shapely femmes that make today's implanted sex-starlets look like Moms Mabley. Difficult to describe, impossible to forget and totally one-of-a-kind, this lost relic is the *CITIZEN KANE* of surreal sex flicks!

COOL BREEZE (1972). After their success with *SHAFT*, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was hyper for a repeat hit that would play as well in the white suburbs as it did with black, urban crowds. Well, even though this *BREEZE* didn't spark crossover box office the way Roundtree's suave private eye did, it features solid performers and an honest-to-goodness script (a rarity in this type of grindhouse fodder). Based on the novel by W.R. Burnett (which was also used for John Huston's *THE ASPHALT JUNGLE*), director Barry Pollack crosses the color barrier and laces this standard crime melodrama with a funky veneer, street slang, plus wild dashikis and 'fros. And though some viewers might be disappointed by its lack of cheap thrills, the flick works nicely as an upscale black actioner. Much of the film's success is thanks to Thalmus Rasulala, who stars as ex-con Sydney Lord James, a slick professional hustler only days outta San Quentin. This "super spade dude" is connected to the core and Rasulala runs with this fast-talking role, which comes equipped with an ice cream suit, a con man smile, and a mega-plan for a 3 million



dollar jewel robbery—the proceeds of which will be used to set up a bank for all the local Brothers and Sisters (holy social consciousness!). The first half of the story follows Lord James while he rounds up a crew to pull the job, bouncing between two-bit crooks, fences and even a sleazy evangelist. And once he's collected his gang, they don white face masks (a nice image), bust into a high security safe, and (despite the unexpected appearance of the fuzz), Rasulala gets away with a bagful of top dollar merchandise. Unfortunately, while the first half is a tough, tight set-up, the post-robbery trackdown becomes a total drag when James' gang begins dicking each other around and the script takes on an Oreo complexion. After a while you begin wishing Sweet Sweetback would make a surprise appearance, just to mow down a few honkys and liven things up. Despite its problems, the nearly all-black cast is full of pros led by Rasulala, whose career began on the legit stage by winning Theatre World Magazine's "Most Promising Newcomer of 1966-67" for his role in Pearl Bailey's HELLO DOLLY. Of course, he quickly became stuck with supporting gigs in everything from BLACULA to NEW JACK CITY. The supporting cast includes blaxploitation faves like Raymond St. Jacques, Margaret Avery, Paula Kelly, and a pre-FOXY BROWN "Pamela Grier", who lets her legendary breasts do most of the acting as Rasulala's shot, one-night-stand. I only wish this entire film had the balls of its more isolated moments.

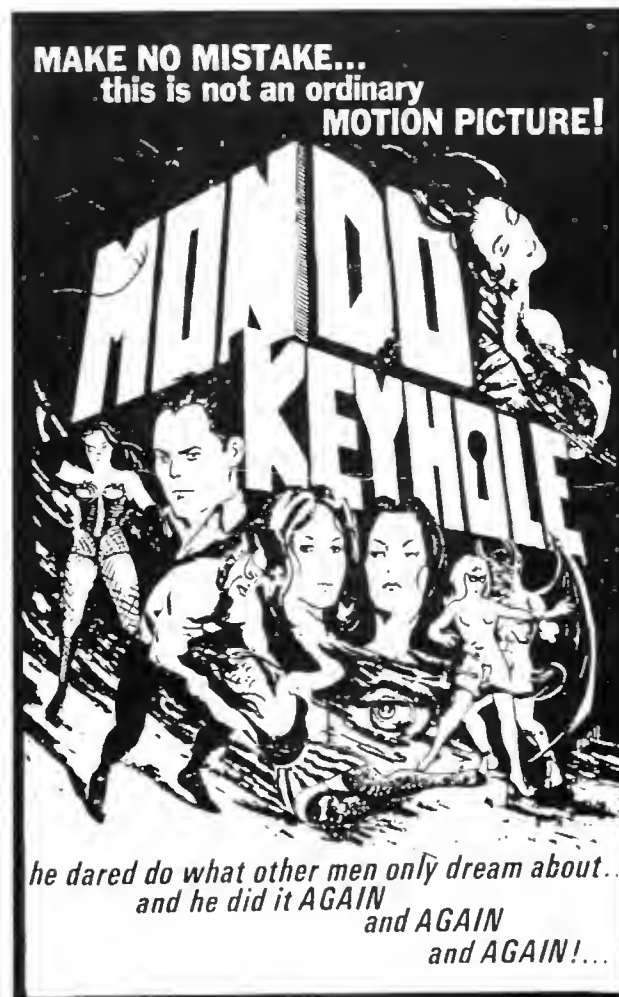
MONDO KEYHOLE [a.k.a. The Worst Crime of All!] (1966). Though not a Mondo film in the true sense of the word, don't let that fact stop you from checking out this slapdash chunk of four-star sexploitation, courtesy of director John Lamb and cinematographer Jack Hill (who, according to some reports, actually filmed much of it). This portrait of sexual deviance is lovingly steeped in twisted tidbits, and within moments you know you're in the presence of rotgut genius! Nick Moriarty stars as Howard Thorne, a happily married man who's having one hell of a time dealing with his drug-addicted wife, his job running a mail order sex mag business, not to mention his deep-seated desire to be a rapist. The movie begins with an average day in the guy's Al Goldstein-esque life, unfortunately checking out all the latest topless models doesn't get him off anymore. Neither does Howard's voluptuous missus, who writhes about the bed in her spider-web panties for her unresponsive, limp-noodle hubbie. You see, all Howie wants to do is fantasize about abusing young woman—which leads to plenty of bargain-basement visuals representing his psychological turmoil including floating brains, flaming skulls, thrashing monsters, and enough rapid-fire segues to keep you on the floor, rolling in your spilt beer. Howard finally follows his unnatural urges and answers a sex ad for a "tough guy", but when Thorne begins roughing up his date, her butch, karate-chopping, dyke girlfriend gets into the act and turns the tables on the sick fuck with the aid of some makeshift domination restraints. Meanwhile, his doped wife freaks out when Howie tries to rape her (unfortunately, he'd mistaken her for

another broad at the time), so she crashes a Bacchus-style party, complete with a punch bowl laced with LSD, a human salad bar, an in-pool orgy, and (best of all) an honest-to-goodness tour of Hell. As you can see, this isn't your ordinary grindhouse slop, and instead of the usual puerile nudity and debauchery, this pic revels in true inter-gender weirdness. One of my favorite in-jokes is an encounter with Thorne's stag film director, who gushes about the depth and symbolism in his work (even though all he's filming is a simple catfight). Best of all is Hill's amazing camerawork and vivid imagery, which shows what you can do with no cash, a few busty babes, and a wealth of sleazy imagination. A true find for stoned sickies!

IO NO CORONADO! (1993). Craig Baldwin's mindwarping TRIBULATION 99 [ST#4] was a tripped-out explosion of found footage that warned us of a conspiracy involving J.F.K.'s murder, the Bermuda Triangle, alien beings living in the center of the earth, plus U.S./Latin American policy over the past 40 years. Well, this equally ingenious follow-up also requires several viewings in order to assimilate its rapid-fire barrage of images and ideas. His subject matter is heavier

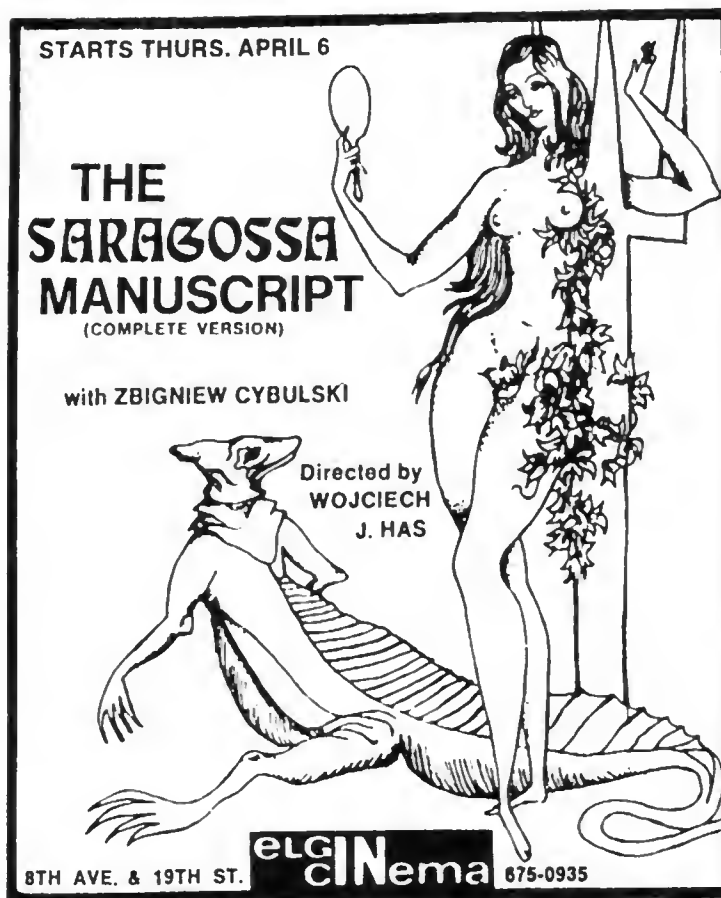
this time 'round, with Baldwin exploring the raw truth behind our history of rampant genocide, as well as the Catholic Church's lengthy battle to convert the world (even if it means murdering or enslaving the entire godless lot of us). Sure, the notion of charting several centuries of man's inhumanity to itself seems like a massive undertaking, but Baldwin's unique narrative vision distills it all down to 40 minutes. At the center of the story is 16th century Conquistador/Asswipe Francisco Coronado, who went in search of the legendary Seven Cities of Gold (so the fanatical Church could loot the place for their own dwindling coffers). Of course, all they find in Southwest America are adobe houses and "heathens", but nevertheless, these Spanish shithheads decide to hang out for awhile and kill, steal and torture in the name of their highly-overrated God. This is an unexpurgated history lesson for the underground generation, with Baldwin shooting crude footage of actors playing these swine, then interspersing their escapades with clips from old movies and travelogues. Baldwin deftly cannibalizes anything that'll help get his point across, whether it's a caveman pic, The Lone Ranger, Gulliver's Travels, or Corman's THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM. In addition to being a sly

commentary on bone-dry educational films, Craig also makes it all relevant to current day events by comparing Coronado's bloodthirsty legacy to today's nuclear waste industry and its similar disregard for those very same lands. But don't get the wrong idea about this bleak look at man's arrogance and lust for conquest—believe it or not, it's also funny as hell! Especially during Coronado's final, brain-damaged days, as he hallucinates his face off and stumbles about in full Conquistador regalia (with modern cities blatantly behind him). All in all, further proof that Craig Baldwin is one of the most wildly inventive indie filmmakers working today.



THE SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT [Rekpois Znalezione W Saragossie] (1965). Polish director Wojciech Has was in for a massive undertaking when he adapted Count Jan Potocki's 19th century work for the screen. The result was this exhaustive mindfuck—and although it had all the surreal elements to be an early Midnight Movie hit (a la EL TOPO), its three-hour running time and lack of gratuitous sex & violence kept it a barely screened secret (it sat for seven years before getting a New York City playdate). This baffling historical epic begins when two opposing military officers find a beautiful old book, and even though they're in the midst of a battle, they put aside their differences to read about the hideously convoluted adventures of a young Captain of the Walloon Guard, Alphonso van Worden. Segue to Zbigniew Cybulski as the foolhardy Alphonso, traveling through the desolate, uncharted regions of 18th century Spain and encountering Gypsies, hanged men, mischievous spirits, and a couple of lusty Tunisian sisters who lure him into their sumptuous bed. What makes this movie such a blast is the way Has structures his narrative, because every time Alphonso encounters someone new, they take the opportunity to tell one of their own bizarre tales—and suddenly, the film becomes a story, within a story, within a story, et cetera. At times we're 5 or 6 stories deep, and at one point, even the exasperated characters complain about how confusing the movie is. These bizarre vignettes are weaved together into a playful, nearly incomprehensible tapestry about Good Vs. Evil, with the tales occasionally paralleling each other, or simply turning back in on themselves—making this the HEAD of Polish art films. The ever-mutating script includes Inquisition sadists, zombies, ill-fated romances, tedious philosophical discourses, plus a creepy Cabalist and his beautiful sister. In addition, those Moorish sisters keep reappearing to lure various dim-witted heroes into their supernatural boudoir. Although many of the individual episodes seem pointless, director Has loves to shift gears at the most unexpected moment and overwhelm you with heavy-duty symbolism. His b&w photography keeps the setting sumptuous, yet appropriately filthy, along with a fondness for cool Goth props, such as chalices made outta skulls. Recommended only for the most intrepid arthouse addicts, this rich (albeit half-baked) odyssey will undoubtedly send most viewers screaming for the exits, in search of the nearest Sonny Chiba film.

DELLAMORTE, DELLAMORE [Of Death, Of Life] (1994). It's about time for a new, smart gore-a-thon, since all the old masters are either dead or in Hollywood (same thing). And after years of having the shadow of mentor Dario Argento hanging over him, Michele Soavi has broken through with one of the most astonishing horror romps since DAWN OF THE DEAD. Even fans of his early work (STAGE-FRIGHT, THE CHURCH, THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER) will be taken off guard by this terrific tale of the undead, which is simultaneously



romantic, comedic and so original it breathes new life into a mildewed genre. If you haven't gotten the point yet—I loved this flick! The usually stiff Rupert Everett chucks his arthouse romeo routine (after his Bob Dylan debacle, **HEARTS OF FIRE**, I'm surprised the guy didn't ditch acting entirely) and leaps headfirst into this Italian zombie epic like a pastaland Bruce Campbell. Rupert plays Francesco Dellamorte, a cemetery superintendent whose job requirements are getting a little odd. You see, his corpses are rising from the dead after seven days, and Francesco has the dubious responsibility of re-killing these "returners" (a bullet or shovel to the head, preferably) and re-burying 'em, with the aid of his oafish gravedigger, Gnaghi (a Curly Joe clone so shy he projectile vomits on cute girls). The film gains a wondrously absurd edge in the matter-of-fact way Dellamorte approaches his job—offing the occasional zombie as blithely as he'd flip a burger at McDonalds—and Everett has

never shown more talent than playing this impotent, philosophical misanthrope. Dellamorte's life takes a turn for the better when he falls for a beautiful widow (Anna Falchi), but wouldn't you know it, just when the pair launches into a bonedance on top of her ex-hubbie's grave, her Deader Half reemerges to take a meaty chunk out of his unfaithful bride. From then on, Dellamorte's life gets even weirder, as he's driven to slaughter *living* folks. Meanwhile, Soavi uses this as a springboard for a barrage of disturbing imagery, including Everett fondled by a rotting corpse; Gnaghi falling in love with the disembodied head of the Mayor's daughter; and a school bus full of dead kids providing a wealth of bloodthirsty possibilities. Meanwhile, Dellamorte and Gnaghi prove to be the Abbott and Costello of the Gut-Muncher Circuit. The visuals are goddamned gorgeous (putting Argento and his sad ilk to shame), the cynical wit is razor-sharp, and the entire film has a dark romanticism that struck a resonant chord. Best of all, Soavi isn't afraid to open his arms to the nether reaches of bad taste (especially Dellamorte's visit to the Doc for his impotence, which is a true sphincter-tightener), and though I don't often gush over a horror film, this is a seductive achievement in zombie dementia.

BEST OF THE N.Y. UNDERGROUND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL: YEAR ONE (Film Threat Video; 1995). If you're new to the wide world of home-brewed cinema, this compilation from Stranger Than Fiction Productions is a kickass starting point. Pulling together some of the best shorts from their '94 festival, this creme de la crapola ranges from basic gonzo silliness to grim doses of life, murder, drugs, and misguided love... Director Modi is represented twice, in **ROSA MI AMOUR** and **MOMMY, DADDY AND ME**, flaunting his raw knack at capturing emotional and alcoholic dysfunction; **X—THE BABY CINEMA** by Robert Banks Jr. is a collage about Malcolm X, which rips Spike Lee another asshole in the process; plus Helen Stickler's **QUEEN MERCY** is a dark drama featuring Tess Ashton as a peep

show hostess dealing with her scuzzy clientele. And though Peter Sarkisian's vision of drug addiction, *DETRITUS*, is full of hallucinations and warehouse chic (like a poor man's *Nine Inch Nails* video), this *TETSUO*-on-heroin is more pretentious than disturbing. As for my favorites? First, there's a series of hilarious computer-animation tidbits from Randy Clower entitled *MY ADVENTURES IN THE TIME SPIRAL*. This Mr. Peabody and Sherman for the '90s time-travels back to Dallas' grassy knoll, Elvis' death and Adolph Hitler—all with appropriately disastrous effects. Glenn Ficarra's *SCREAMING CHIGGER PRODUCTION* is a domestic upheaval featuring a fat slob of a dad abusing his son with a sadistic game of "Pull My Finger"; while a personal highlight is Chigger's *HUNKI DORI*. A *POEM*, a dead-perfect Beat parody. Josh Wintringham's *PLEASANT HILL U.S.A.* is another stand-out. A documentary of repressed anger set in a suburban Ohio shithole, which shows how one fat, ostracized 18-year-old suddenly grabbed a gun, robbed the local bank, and shot three people. But the best is Frank Sebastiano's slacker revenge flick, *SPRING BREAK*, which follows two New Jersey boneheads (the Meatloaf clone is played by Frank S. himself) on a roadtrip to Florida to kill the guy who fucked the fat one's girlfriend...Hopefully Film Threat Video will continue to pump out these packages on a yearly basis. And though not as vile and urgent as their Kern or Buttgeret fare, this anthology features some genuinely-inspired shit.



BACCHANALE (1970). This groovy sexploitation pic from director/brothers Lem and John Amero (*DIARY OF A SWINGER*, *THE CORPORATE QUEEN*) takes the penny-ante grindhouse feature to new heights with its surreal volley of sexual escapades, laced together like a bad acid hangover. This amazing, tripped-out journey is overloaded with hilariously hoary symbolism, discordant sound design, and ever-changing visuals (shifting from sepia, to color, to burnt-out b&w—in other words, whatever stock they had laying around). And while the Amero Brothers (who also photographed, edited and wrote it) proclaim a fascination for the inner workings of the sexual mind, they don't forget to skimp on such hardcore

delicacies as on-screen fellatio and up-close penetration (no doubt practicing for their later porn-projects, including *BLONDE AMBITION* and *EVERY INCH A LADY*). Luscious Uta Erickson (who sure is pretty, but can't act worth beans) stars as Ruth, a woman lost in her own fantasies. And though she encounters a variety of couplings while wandering about in a sheer nightgown, she's too repressed to ever take part. Happily, the film never bothers to make much sense, preferring to flit from one sexual vignette to the next. First, Uta plays voyeur on a couple making love on a floor; then she's in the middle of a trendy, post-Beat party; then she's being fondled by Cocteau-inspired hands growing out of a wall. The reason behind all this hypnotically cheezy nonsense? "You must find your own truth," says the ubiquitous Man in the Black Hood, before being hauled away by a pair of gay fashion designers. On a simple narrative level, this thing is a disaster, but the Amero's display so much gutsy enthusiasm you almost forget how terrible the entire thing is. The cameraman has a field day with close-up genitalia, and when first projected on a big screen, the penises must've looked like the Sandworms in *DUNE*. They even toss in some (then-risque) lesbian hijinx and male homoshenanigans, a mini-Dante's Inferno, and brief appearances from "Richard Jennings" and "Anna Riva" (for you novices out there, that's the beloved filmmaking team of Michael and Roberta Findlay). The kicker is Uta's trauma, featuring an incest problem with her dead brother, fueled by a repressive mother. I guess that explains why the naked gal was writhing about on her brother's grave and jerking off a corpse. Early '70s audiences, who expected a simple schtupp flick, must've been floored by its unfathomable thrills (particularly when a guy is anally raped with the wrong end of a bullwhip) but I love this mind-boggling crap primarily *because* of its brain-fried edge.

THE GRIM REAPER (1976). White trash director Ron Ormond is responsible for such early drive-in delights as *THE EXOTIC ONES* and *THE GIRL FROM TOBACCO ROW*. But by the '70s, The Ormond Organization began pumping out celluloid religious tracts that were meant to spread God's Word to every unwashed, in-bred, chicken-fucker south of the Mason-Dixon. But even though this hour-long, Bible Belt bullshit is hateful, self-righteous and inept, I got a kick out of its perpetual stupidity. It opens with Dr. Jack Van Impe, a fire 'n' brimstone blowhard, who hopes this piece of Tennessee-lensed trash will show us all The Way (yeah, the way to the liquor cabinet, that is). It's followed by a fictional, domestic melodrama beginning with a boy's funeral, during which the preacher refuses to finish the service because the dead kid refused to go to church (preferring to swill beer, watch football and race cars) and is going to Hell. Then we meet the corpse's screwed-up family, led by a Faithless Father who's continually trying out other dead-end paths to salvation, including a turbaned spiritualist (a.k.a. another Pawn of the Devil) and a church-going Mom who has hallucinations of her bloodied son stumbling through the bedroom. But thank goodness, Christian son Tim is on hand to spout Scripture to his spiritually-bankrupt parents. This is all just a Sunday School lesson set within a dysfunctional framework, complete with shabby flashbacks to apostle days. But the scariest bit is a last-minute appearance by Jerry Falwell, the crown prince of slime. Looking like he's been dipped in Crisco, this fat fuck shoves his meaty face into the camera for a couple painful minutes in order to regurgitate his Bible swill and take us on a first-hand glimpse of Hell, complete with flames, demons, screaming souls and bad backwoods perms. I can't believe Ormond could be serious about this cut-rate lunacy (I'd prefer to think he was only doing it for the money, in order to pay for that new 13-year-old hooker who just moved in down the road) and what makes it even funnier is the fact some hick peabrains actually fell for all this holier-than-thou propaganda. Sure, this pabulum probably still plays to cheering, gun-tottin' crowds of drooling Christian parasites, but for all of us heathens, this is just high-grade hooey at the expense of our slow, Southern neighbors.

THE BLIND BEAST [Moju] (1969). This disturbing, Japanese psycho-ramp is one of the weirdest, most fetishistic pics ever made, and sure to sear its way onto your video-softened brainpan. On the surface, it sounds like *THE COLLECTOR* or any number of hostage/abductor scenarios, with Eiji Funakoshi (whose career has ranged from *FIRES ON THE PLAIN* to *GAMERA*) starring as an obsessed, blind sculptor named Michio who kidnaps the beautiful young model Aki (Mako Midori) and locks her in his bizarre studio in the middle of nowhere. But director Yasuzo Masumura shatters any preconceptions by drenching the story in artsy eroticism and hallucinogenic set design that had me dumbstruck. First off, let's discuss his studio/prison, which is covered with twisted sculptures of oversized human body parts. One wall is nothing but bare breasts, another is blanketed with huge ears, plus noses, lips, jutting legs—and the piece de resistance is the 50-foot nude couple lounging in the center of the room. I've never seen anything like it before (or since), and the perversity doesn't stop there, kiddies! Aki is at first terrified by her plight, but hesitantly poses for her kidnapper's new works, with Michio continually fondling her for reference. He occasionally chases her around and over his immense statues, and when Aki finally gets a chance to escape, Michio's squat, stubborn ol' bag of a mother (who condones her son's sadistic hobby) stops her. It's only when Aki decides to seduce Michio that the *real* mindgames begin, all set against this surreal, claustrophobic backdrop. As the months pass, Aki herself goes blind from the prolonged lack of light, and becomes as nuts as Michio, with these two sightless basketcases rutting atop his monstrous statues and indulging in rudimentary sadomasochism, including slicing themselves up with rusty sculpting tools. Let's not forget the delirious finale though, when maniacal Michio grabs a cleaver and hammer, and lovingly chops off Aki's arms and legs (tactfully off-camera)—giving the gal the *BOXING HELENA* treatment a quarter century before Jennifer Lynch shat out her runny celluloid turd. Director Masumura's greatest accomplishment is the film's tactile atmosphere and stark, b&w widescreen photography, which help suck the viewer into its intensely erotic, wildly pretentious world. This unforgettable, headfirst descent into hothouse art/sleaze is never afraid to follow its more brutal instincts, and remains more provocative than anything being produced today.

HUNTER S. THOMPSON: THE CRAZY NEVER DIE (1988). Clocking in at a sparse half-hour, this no-budget, cinema veri-drunk documentary is a must-see for fans of the illustrious Good Doctor. No others need apply. Taking a break from their porno activities, the infamous Mitchell Brothers give us Thompson at his lucid best (which isn't saying much, of course), guzzling hard liquor and babbling like a circus geek. But the genius *is* still there, even if it takes you a while to figure out what the fuck the guy is rambling about. Opening with a quote from the Book of Revelations, this is a crude portrait of Hunter on the road. A typical day in the life, which includes spastically whacking at golf balls; a typical breakfast (pass the Maalox); cavorting with two naked, scrawny blondes; raising hell at the Survival Research Lab's workshop; but mostly, lecturing to packed auditori-

ums of rapid fans. When on stage, this guy is a pissed-off dinosaur, long past extinction but still railing against Ronald Reagan, "that filthy little animal" Garry Trudeau, corruption, evil, and the shattering of the American Dream. Meanwhile, most of his fans are well-fed Frat Boys who only know Thompson from *WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM* and the occasional Doonesbury strip. Unfortunately, while the guy's stumbling around in a stupor, you tend to forget that Hunter was once one of the most articulate, astute (not to mention, piss-your-pants hilarious) social analysts of the '70s. And though he's been coasting on his rep for years, the spark is still there (for further proof, check out

his Nixon obit—the funniest thing I've read in years—where he suggested "his body should've been burnt in a dumpster"). This slapdash profile never digs as deep as you'd like it too, but it's all we're getting for now, so grab a quart of Wild Turkey and enjoy.

TRANSGRESSION (1993; Masque Cinema Ltd. 928 Broadway, NY, NY 10010). Here's further proof that if you're looking for a halfway original horror pic, your best bet is to avoid all the studio shit and dig into the world of independents, because these hungry new filmmakers still have a stench of reality to their work. That's particularly true with this impressive, feature-length slay-fest from writer/director Michael DiPaolo which (despite some ultra-disturbing scenes of torture and murder) is more interested in the psychology of the leads than in simple abattoir atmospherics. Molly Jackson stars as Mary Selby, who tells us (in flashbacks) how this once-respected TV reporter ended up a Death Row inmate. The tale kicks in when Selby dives headfirst into an investigation of a notorious prostitute killer, ignoring

the warnings of her Police Lieutenant boyfriend. But when this serial slayer gets wind of Mary's news reports, *she* becomes the object of his attention. The Mad Slasher/Female Investigator duo initially smacks of a *SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* clone, but DiPaolo takes the plot in some extreme directions, especially when Mary is kidnapped by Mr. Psycho (Marc St. Camille). While in his care she's forced to watch him slice up a new victim, and even after the ordeal is over, her traumatic experience sends her life into a drunken, self-destructive spiral downward (though personally, I thought Mary's change from uptight reporter to rabid dominatrix was a distinct improvement). DiPaolo successfully digs into the lifestyle of the sick and psychotic (he has a solid background in the area, since he spent nine years videotaping confessions for the Brooklyn D.A.'s office), and the pic is packed with wild, bloodthirsty sequences. The scenes of St. Camille with his pick-ups are particularly nasty and DiPaolo's camera never flinches—whether this sickie is smearing blood over his bare chest, sporting a chic leather hood, or staking a cheap whore onto a makeshift cross (for a little of that always-welcome anti-Christian imagery). Shot on 16mm, in-and-around New York City in only 12 days, the pic looks terrific. And although the script gets heavyhanded with ponderous revelations about The Beast inside us all (snore...), it's DiPaolo's atmospheric, in-your-face direction that puts this slasher pic several notches above the usual, generic fare. At its best, it achieves a brutal, Abel Ferrara-esque honesty, as well as a willingness to confront the darkest niches of human behavior.



DEVIL RIDER! (1970). Director Brad F. Grinter will always be a favorite after creating the impossibly-wrongheaded **BLOOD FREAK** (the best Anti-Drug, Christian, Splatter Pic featuring a Killer Chicken-Man ever made!). Well, here's another one of his cinematic debacles. It's dazzlingly inept, atrociously acted and mad-deningly moralistic—in other words, yet another misguided must-see for fans of wretched, drive-in swill. Set in some Southern sinkhole, Sharon Mahon stars as Kathy, a blonde teen who's screwing up her life by hanging out with lowlife bikers at their forest campground. And when Champ, their one-eyed leader, doses Kathy with "a little happiness bomb that'll turn your world all kinds of pretty colors", she's sucked into their anti-social band of misfits. Meanwhile, Kathy's distraught parents sit at their home (consisting of a table and a curtain backdrop—shades of Ed Wood!) and worry that Kathy will turn out just like their older daughter, who's now a cheap call girl. A seedy private eye is hired to (all-too-happily) scour the local saloons, locates hooker sis Penny, and learns that a gang rape was responsible for Penny's fall from grace (of course, we get a prolonged flashback of her brutal deflowering—you wouldn't want to disappoint all the misogynists in the audience, would you?). At least the grubby, pathetic bikers are good for a few drunken laughs. For example, when a pair of biker mamas get into a catfight and one dies, these compassionate guys simply toss the corpse into some nearby quicksand. And when the puffy-faced detective is taken prisoner (after dressing up like the world's oldest biker and trying to infiltrate the gang) they strip him to the waist, tie him to a tree, and joust at him with spears. It's lucky for Kathy that her karate-chopping, muscle-headed boyfriend appears, beats all the dirtballs to a pulp, and saves her from pulling a train. Though technically a biker movie, it's at the bottom rung of the genre, leaving most viewers in a Karen Ann Quinlan-like coma from sheer boredom. Still, Grinter's dialogue is so ripe it's almost surreal and the cast is populated with authentic white trash vermin. You'd think Grinter would've wised up and tossed in the towel after the first dailies from this insipid, cinematic turd. But following in the footsteps of crap auteurs like Larry Buchanan and Andy Milligan, he just kept going, despite a total lack of moviemaking knowhow—and the Schlock World is richer for his pigheaded perseverance.

TENEMENT [a.k.a. Game of Survival] (1985). Whether was she co-helming '60s nudie-roughies with late hubbie Michael; acting in sex pics under her Anna Riva pseudonym; helming solo porn-projects like **ANGEL NUMBER NINE**, **ROSEBUD** or **TEENAGE MILKMAIDS**; or showing off her urban savvy in this unapologetically sleazy gang epic—Roberta Findlay always knew how to get a rise out of a slobbering, 42nd Street crowd. This is one of her best solo directorial efforts, mixing equal parts of **THE WARRIORS** and **DEATH WISH**, while wallowing in so much graphic (but riotously goofy) violence that you'll need a trough of beer to wash it down. The action is set around



a rundown South Bronx apartment building, whose population of good-hearted tenants (the usual mix of ethnic stereotypes, including cute children, senior citizens, and a blind guy) are being terrorized by a gang of street thugs. The cops try to roust the gang from their basement HQ, but since the justice system sucks, these vermin are back the very next day to lay siege to the entire building. They begin by cutting the telephone lines, then take over the place floor-by-floor. Now, if this were a Menahem Golan flick, somebody like Charles Bronson would waddle in and save the day. But in comparison to Findlay's ballsy vision, Bronson is nothing but an aging pussy and the entire **DEATH WISH** series is as gritty as **PIPPILONG-STOCKING**. In a wise move, the Joel Bender script only spends about five minutes establishing character, while the second half deteriorates into a savage, non-stop assault for sadists of all shapes and sizes. Oddly enough, I found myself rooting for the gang, instead of the smarmy, do-gooder residents. And in a highlight for all you sickos out there, a black woman is tied to her bed, raped, stabs her attacker in the eye with scissors, and gets raped again (this time with a broom handle). Of course, if any of these tenants packed a gun, this film would've lasted only ten minutes, but instead it takes them almost an hour before they fight back against their scummy invaders. Happily, even the righteous finale is coated in imaginative bloodshed, including makeshift electrocutions and refrigerator crushings. And for once, the setting actually looks like a real-life slumlord shithole (I should know, since I live in one). Unfortunately, a lot of the tension is broken by the fact this murderous gang looks like rejects from a **ROLLER BOOGIE** casting call, led by Sweathog-wannabee Chaco (Enrique Sandino). Nevertheless, this is a howl for grindhouse addicts, and further proof that Robert Findlay is a true goddess of exploitation cinema.

SCHRAMM (1993). Although I've been disappointed with everything Jorg Buttgerit has done since **NEKROMANTIK**, this German dose of cinematic electroshock immediately puts the guy back on top of the horror A-list. And if you were wondering if Jorg would go soft in his old age, forget it! This is his slickest, sickest pic yet, wading nose-deep into the mind of a serial killer, with plenty of trippy sequences and a fragmented flashback structure. The first time we glimpse our lead, Lothar Schramm (Florian Koerner von Gostorf), he's inviting a pair of annoying door-to-door Bible thumpers into his apartment for a little java—he then proceeds to slice 'em up, strip 'em and pose their corpses in various sexual positions for his photo album. And if you're still watching after this ghastly (not to mention, hilarious) intro, then you're a sick fuck too, and will undoubtedly consider this one of the creepiest portraits of madness since **HENRY**. The brutish, low key Lothar seems nice enough to his friends, but he's a hardcore sicko at heart. Not only do we get a scene of this Lonely Guy screwing a lovely, pink blow-up female torso, but since Jorg loves to takes things to their cringable extremes, we also get the heartwarming opportu-

nity to watch him wash it out afterward. And in between masturbating to girlie pix or nailing his dick to a tabletop, we're privy to glimpses into his past crimes of murder and rape (mind you, in that order). NEKROMANTIK 2 starlet Monika M. even returns to the fold to play Lothar's pretty platonic friend, who gets Schrammed when he drugs her nightcap, strips her, then jerks off in front of the napping neighbor. This brilliant film doesn't just capture his craziness, it lives it—sucking in the viewer along the way. That's especially true during our trips into Schramm's gore-laden nightmares, featuring a dentist who pries out one of Lothar's eyeballs with a scalpel; Schramm peeling open his own skull; and (silliest of all) an ugly li'l vagina monster (complete with bad teeth) which turns up in bed with him. Buttgereit's technical expertise is terrific, particularly the disturbing camerawork and editing, helping to create a hypnotic, chinese box of a portrait that'll leave you totally disoriented and in need of a long shower.

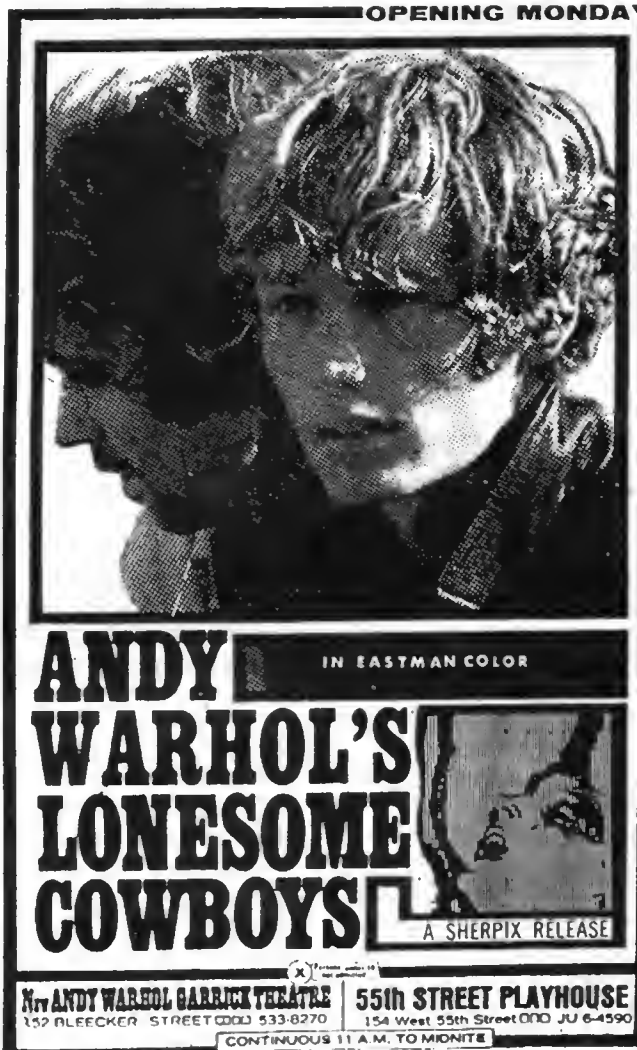
LONESOME COWBOYS (1968). After becoming an arthouse celeb with such anti-movies as THE CHELSEA GIRLS [SC#6], Andy Warhol set his quirky sights and self-proclaimed "superstars" on parodying the western genre, and this wiggled-out wagon train is one of his most infamous works—probably because it had a halfway decent ad campaign and an honest-to-goodness plot (well, almost). BLAZING SADDLES, it ain't. Making up most of the movie as they went along, Andy hoped to twist clichés on their ass with his Lower East Side druggie humor, cheap sex, and openly homosexual goings-on between his long-on-the-trail cowboys. Shot on 16mm in the middle of Arizona over a grueling five day shooting schedule, this flick is a mess! So loose and inept it makes Dennis Hopper's hippie ode to the western, THE LAST MOVIE, look like a Touchstone pic in comparison. And though not nearly as hypnotic as Warhol's earlier, more experimental works, it still has that aggravating, smug edge that makes you wanna beat the entire stoned cast to death with a meat axe. It begins when a band of weary cowpokes ride into a deserted tumbleweed of a town, and this pack of "brothers" features Warhol-regs Joe Dallesandro, Eric Emerson and SoCal surfer stiff Tom Hompertz as Julian, the object of everyone's hormonal affections. There they encounter local nurse Taylor Mead, who hits on all the pretty young boys and becomes the Gabby Hayes of gay westerns. While Viva plays bordello owner Ramona, who at one point is stripped in the dirt by the lusty cowboys (who, oddly enough, seem to prefer rolling about with each other even more). If there ever was a plot behind this nonsense, it's not on the screen, and the thing gave me a headache after only ten minutes. After that, it gets even worse—when Dallesandro is chided about his haircut, the guys pop a few beers, the sheriff gets in drag, and the only halfway honest moment is when Dallesandro and Mead boogie to

The Beatles' "Magical Mystery Tour" (looking so stoned they probably forgot the camera was even rolling). Scrawny Viva steals the show with her acerbic, grating style (a la John Waters) and her tragic romance with hunky Hompertz (Get it? Ramona and Julian?). The fake setting and costumes give it all a New-Yorkers-playing-dress-up veneer, and no one familiar with Warhol's work will be surprised to learn it's also filled with unintelligible sound and incompetent photography (though the camera *does* love to linger on the cutest boys). I'm only relieved that despite shooting over 5 hours worth of raw chaos, Warhol had the good sense to hack it down to a more digestible 110 minutes.

DJANGO (1966). If you ask a basement full of vidiots what their favorite spaghetti western is, most of 'em will name some bloated Sergio Leone flick. Well, *my* pick is this crude, slaughter-fest from director Sergio Corbucci, which set the tone for hundreds of no-brainer pastaland shoot-'em-ups to come. Admittedly, Leone was a master of widescreen composition, but DJANGO won me over with its lovable kill-everyone-in-sight vision and kickass mashismo. Banned for a quarter century in England (thanks to their prissy fuckin' censors) and barely released in the States, this western rotgut is packed with

anti-social behaviour and wall-to-wall sadism. Franco Nero stars in the title role as a black-garbed gunslinger who drags a coffin behind him in the dirt. Unshaven and steely-eyed, he strides into a seedy hole of a town, complete with a recently-rescued damsel, trusty casket, and a storyline you've seen a dozen times—with Django stuck in the middle of a feud between the villainous Major Jackson's vile band of red-masked killers and a motley pack of banditos. But just wait until Django opens up that coffin, pulls out his hidden machine gun and slaughters an entire street full of scummy extras in the blink of an eye! In between these bursts of gorgeous violence, Django teams up with the Mexicans to rob a fort, but gets screwed at every turn. Franco makes a perfect anti-hero, and the next best character is the town itself, which has to be the most pitiful, grey, mud-caked cesspool in celluloid history. And you gotta love a movie that features people massacred for a cheap thrill, Django's hands brutally crushed, an ear sliced off (and stuffed in the victim's mouth—I'm surprised Tarantino didn't 'borrow' that idea for RESERVOIR DOGS too), female mud-wrestling, and an array of beer-swilling dirtbags. Best of all, the number of characters who survive to the end credits can be counted on two fingers. Unfortunately,

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Corbucci's career took a nosedive in later years, content to crank out Terence Hill slop like SUPER FUZZ, while lesser directors continued the series with different, interchangeable leading men playing Django. Accept no cheap knock-offs though, because this ode to fast-paced, wholesale carnage is as good 'n' grim as it gets.

TOP OF THE HEAP (1972). From the look of its generic ad campaign, you'd never expect this pic to be so severely brain-damaged. Christopher St. John (best known at the time for his fourth-billed role in *SHAFT*) starred, directed and wrote this surreal blaxploitation pic that'll even leave hardcore schlock junkies in awe. This film somehow manages to be both totally earnest and thoroughly gonzo in the same breath, and you get the feeling St. John never grasped the unintentional hilarity of his vision. We begin by meeting George Lattimer, a black Washington D.C. cop who's losing his grasp on reality. He's disillusioned with his job, depressed by family problems, and even ridiculed by the Brothers he arrests.

This alone would be enough to push the schmuck into a murderous, TAXI DRIVER-esque urban rage, but there's also a slight problem with the guy's uncontrollable fantasy world. You see, in the middle of his work day, he suddenly imagines he's N.A.S.A.'s first black astronaut preparing for a moon mission. But when Lattimer comes back to reality, he's further aggravated by his mother's death, his daughter's drug use, and the fact he's just a lowly foot patrolman "fighting The Man's War". So he screams at his wife, screws his mistress, beats up a dope peddler, and gets shat on by his white bosses. Thank god for the goofy hallucinations, which save us all from his soap opera bullshit. During a pre-space flight press conference he lights up a joint and compares his anxiety to "waiting for your Welfare check"; a hospital stay is enlivened by some bedside comfort from a Swedish nurse; his astronaut's hometown return has him greeted by a ghost town and his dead mama; and the most insane image is St. John going native (accompanied by tribal drums, no less), running about the woods butt-naked and smashing watermelons to bits. The film cuts between reality and fantasy without rhyme or reason, mixing diehard dementia with ponderous social statements, and I would've loved to have heard the comments coming from a typical grindhouse crowd during its first run. This whacked-out vanity production is more rotgut fun than a dozen simple blaxploitation flicks, but you can also understand why St. John never made another movie. Co-starring Paula Kelly as "Black Chick", Allen Garfield as a pigish taxi driver, and even a cheap Nixon impersonator.

THERE'S ALWAYS VANILLA [a.k.a. The Affair] (1971). When first encountering this early feature by George Romero, your initial response might be "why hasn't it been rediscovered?" You'd think some fly-by-night video outlet could've made a few bucks by hawking it to his fans. Well, one look at this insipid chunk of counterculture tripe and you'll understand why it's been justifiably forgotten. Because you'll need a handful of Vivarins just to endure its pseudo-hippie hokum. Even worse, the leads are so obnoxious and self-centered you'll want to kick all their teeth out. Directed, photographed and edited by Romero, this is essentially just another no-budget love story about two free-thinking souls (Ugh...I can feel the bile rising already). Chris (Ray Laine) is a college drop-out who has the

annoying habit of talking to the camera lens. And though his Dad is a white-collar ol' fart, Chris is so damned groovy that he convinces Pop to get stoned and pick up a couple slutty barmaids. During another one of his banal adventures, Chris meets Lynn (Judith Streiner), a stuck-up commercial model; and while she admires his Free Spirit sensibilities, he simply lusts after her leggy charms and empty-headed smile. The rest of the pic follows their brief fling, which is so simple-minded it makes *LOVE STORY* look like a Thomas Pynchon novel. At first they roam through parks and rap about "turning on", but once their romance goes into the toilet, the script

tosses in an illegit kid, a backroom abortion and incessant melodrama. The guy's a jerk, the girl's a boob, and you'll feel like both after wasting 90 minutes of your life on this Pittsburgh-lensed crap. There isn't even any cheap sex, drugs or social rebellion—what did Romero think he was making, an art film? Even its satire on the commercial industry is leaden (gosh, you mean advertising people are full of shit? Now *there's* a revelation, eh?). George's direction is bland, and though the script wants to be bold about how the younger generation deals with love, the result is just dopey and deadeningly inane. Full of ugly costumes, stupid characters, and not nearly enough kitsch to even make it palatable nowadays. This is the antithesis of what made indies like *EASY RIDER* so successful, and though overflowing with good intentions, it's all artificial and poseur-driven. Featuring lousy rock music by Barefoot in Athens and other Pittsburgh locals, who (hopefully) wised up and got more suitable jobs in the local steel mills.

MY SWEET SATAN (Film Threat Video). Fans of *DEADBEAT AT DAWN* have reason to rejoice, because while we're awaiting Jim Van Bebber's long-anticipated feature-

length *CHARLIE'S FAMILY* (if the rough footage is any indication, it's gonna be a gritty, ugly treat), we can revel in this trio of early short pics which tap into his unsettling world of the poor, the drugged and the totally fucked up. The first, *MY SWEET SATAN*, is a 20-minute, powerhouse profile of white trash satanists, complete with tattoos, acid, vomit, and lowlife deadbeats at play. Based on a true tale, we meet a wacky pair of stoned devil worshippers named Ricky and Jimmy, who enjoy sitting around the cemetery caked in blood and holding court for their drugged-out slacker pals. But when a lil' shithead named Gary rips off Ricky, they take him out to a campfire, get him brain-fried on acid, and then torture and kill him. Van Bebber's forte is his love for terrifying, unflinching details (and we get a bucketful here, kids), but it's also beautifully lensed and acted with a raw, crazed edge by Terek Puckett as Jimmy and Van Bebber himself as the caustic Ricky...Next on the program is *ROADKILL: THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN MARTIN*, a 15-minute gross-out featuring a tortured fuck who lives in a rat 'n' trash-filled hovel, sucking down beer after beer, until Martin picks up two stranded tourists, take 'em back to his place, and butchers 'em in his kitchen. Mark Gillespie stars as Martin, and this pic has moments as foul as anything since

HIS RAGE WAS THE ILLNESS OF THE TIMES!



He was
a violent
man...

trouble was—
he also
was a cop.

TOP OF THE HEAP

TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, especially when it comes to Martin's fondness for nailing body parts to his walls. Both shorts are hardcore tests of your endurance, but what makes them truly special isn't simply Van Bebber's ability to shock, but his understanding of these deviants. In a different vein, the tape is rounded off with DOPER, a freeform documentary by Michael King and VanBebber. Though technically pretty rough, this portrait of a typical American stoner named Barry has a canny sense of humor, as this terminal burn-out rambles about how often he gets stoned (every possible moment). The best bits are interviews with the ol' bats this closet pothead works with, who think Barry's the sweetest employee—not realizing he's zonked out at every moment. It's cute, but if (like me) you grew up in a lower-middle-class cesspool like Central New York, most of the teenaged population could've starred in it.

PRIVILEGE (1967). Peter Watkins' work is better known amongst film scholars than the public. His most famous film is *THE WAR GAME*, an award-winning mock-documentary about the repercussions of a nuclear disaster, while his later features garnered sporadic acclaim from critics and total ambivalence by audiences—probably because his vision of our society is a cold, downbeat dirge that didn't sit well with moviegoers in search of mindless claptrap. Well, *PRIVILEGE* gives us Watkins at the height of his cynicism. Imagine Pink Floyd's *THE WALL* crossed with 1984 (plus a dash of *SPINAL TAP*), and you get this rock allegory set in an England of the all-too-near future. Shot in a gritty, realistic style, this is a mod, dark-as-Guinness meditation on fame, politics, youth manipulation, corporate scum, and the power of rock music. And though it begins like a social satire, it takes some decidedly perverse turns, leaves no survivors, and even manages to alienate its target audience. Paul Jones (of Manfred Mann) plays pop idol Steve Shorter, "the most desperately loved entertainer in the world". And from the look of the guy, he's also the most bored and depressed—burnt out from endless touring and parasitic associates. But once he's on stage, watch out! The film opens on a high note, with Shorter's Albert Hall performance of "Free Me", during which he whips his female audience into a frenzy, assaults several cops to the crowd's glee, and turns the theatre into total anarchy. But when the government and the church decide to use Shorter as a pawn to make the younger generation conform, this basketcase-in-waiting finally cracks. And Watkins pulls out all the stops with a savage rally during which Steve is *supposed* to renounce his old, anti-social way and find religion, only to get the full Messiah treatment complete with faith healing, Nazi salutes, illuminated crosses, and oodles of Fascist dogma(nure). As you can guess, this was a tad too deep for stoned masses expecting the simple tribulations of a rock star—suddenly finding themselves in the middle of a total bummer about Authority's ability to castrate and assimilate rebellion for their own uses. And although Watkins loses his satiric footing at times in favor of curdled



melodrama, his gritty visual style and pervading creepiness makes this a one-of-a-kind gem. Co-starring famed fashion model Jean Shrimpton as Shorter's equally morose chick, plus a full roster of hateful supporting shitheads; this ambitious slice of science fiction is more prescient than ever in light of today's corporate music scene and lemming-like public.

THE GLADIATORS [Gladiator-erna] (1970). While *PRIVILEGE* received a (minimal) studio release, this futuristic follow-up was shunted into short-run arthouse venues or college campuses. It's no big surprise, because even though director Peter Watkins delivers some chilling images and snide twists, this is well-worn sci-fi territory. Shot with a bleak documentary framework, in-and-around deserted Swedish factories, we're witness to a military exercise called *The Peace Game*, which determines the balance of world power. Instead of battling en masse and destroying the planet, each country sends a small band of drafted soldiers into a televised skirmish, with the country's military status at stake. Of course, while their men are slaughtering each other, the ol' fart generals

safely watch the carnage on TV. As an additional kicker, the entire show is controlled by a huge computer named Icarus, which keeps the action moving so the viewers don't get bored. Sounds good? It is. For the first twenty minutes, that is. But once Watkins gets his point across (not exactly a new one: "War is bad. Authority sucks"), he continues to hammer away, continually shooting himself in the foot with his emotionally-empty, bone-dry style. It's over-loaded with politico-social rhetoric, a Bergman-esque lethargy, and dopey plot twists once the soldiers open their mouths (the most unfathomable moments involve a ridiculous encounter with hippies, sitar music and bikini'd beauties). On the plus side, most of the action takes place in the dark corridors of a cavernous factory, with Peter Suschitzky's naturalistic photography expertly capturing the dull glaze of the young soldiers' eyes. And though Watkins sneaks in a few nice jabs (the game is sponsored by a Pasta company, who runs subtitled commercials in the midst of the assaults), this low-tech, high-brow think piece is so dull it sucks away any entertainment value, in favor of earnest, but long-winded Military Bashing (not exactly a difficult task, since we *all* know they're a bunch of limp-dicked shitbags).

THE LEGEND OF DOLEMITE (1994). If you know *anything* about '70s black (and blue) culture, you're aware of Rudy Ray Moore, the still-reigning prime minister of raunchy party albums and cosmically inept blaxploitation action-comedies (featuring his Dolemite persona). Well, it's about time somebody threw together a documentary on Rudy's career, even if it's just an extended love letter to the "Godfather of Rap". In fact, director Foster Corder does such a routine job that this could've easily found a spot on A&E's *BIOGRAPHY*, except for the fact Rudy sticks at least 3 "fucks", 2 "niggers" and

1 "pussy" into every sentence. The hour-long tour includes an interview from the man himself (looking a little grey, but still healthy), commentary from recognizable admirers like Ice-T, Arsenio Hall and LaWanda Page, and plenty of unintentional laughs from sycophantic nobodys who boast they learned everything they know from Dolemite (their lack of success speaks for itself). The video follows his career from X-rated comedy records like "Eat Out More Often", to Deuce-stardom in DOLEMITE and THE HUMAN TORNADO. The adverse publicity (one Chicago film critic wrote: "Dolemite is not fit for a blind dog to see") only had fans lining up around the block, and his movies were so filthy, violent, stupid, and crude that they achieve an uncharted level of urban surrealism (imagine SUPERFLY, as directed by Jean-Luc Godard). Best of all, this documentary is loaded with the best scenes from Rudy's brain-fried films, which saves the viewers the painful task of actually sitting through an entire movie of his. On the debit side, most of the pic is devoted to a recent stand-up performance at some shithole nightclub, still performing the same old Eating Pussy jokes he did two decades ago. And although the guy was certainly influential with modern-day rappers, the filmmakers work so hard at wringing a serious subtext out of their material that it becomes ridiculous—akin to making a movie about Jerry Lewis' contributions to World Peace. Lightweight, but essential for blaxploitation addicts (like me).

PONY GIRL (1985). Traci Lords is turning up in everything from MELROSE PLACE to ROSEANNE nowadays, and although most of the American public is aware of her jailbait porno roots, I'm sure most SHOCK CINEMA readers (in others, all you sleazy fucks) have a secret stash of Traci's *true* acting talents (which amounted to a snide pout and some impressive moaning, while assorted orifices were being dry-humped). You wanna see Oscar caliber work? Check out BATTLE OF THE BOMBS, THOSE YOUNG GIRLS (appropriate title, eh?), or any number of illegit treats featuring the underage, coked-out Traci, who became one of the biggest cum depositories of the '80s during her short but potent career. And though many of us are aware of her typical X-rated excursions, this obscure treat is rarely mentioned. It's no wonder, since most viewers will find it less alluring than a JOE FRANKLIN SHOW rerun. It's a fetish film without any real sex, but on the other hand, it's highly recommended for people who get off on watching clothed women marched about like horses (we're talking about a rather specific market here, folks). Most of it's set at a dude ranch catering to bizarre turn-ons, primarily centered around a blonde, big-haired bimbo who orders her Pony Girls to "Get those knees up! Prance!" as they march around a horse carousel in head harnesses and handcuffs. There's also another woman encased in a black scuba suit, tied up on a bed, and getting a little sick of her ordeal. Meanwhile, two rich old shits on a yacht run the place from afar, picking up new girls on the high seas and turning them into their pony slaves. Traci fans will undoubtedly

be pissed to learn that her only contribution is prancing about in a circle and some tame toplessness; but this pic also features Michelle Bauer, who's spent the last 15 years flashing her ever-increasing bust in every film she could worm her way into. This time she's squeezed into black boots and a leather bodice with her tits hanging out, then trained into submission by some cowboy-dickweed with a whip. For a full hour, we endure this amateurish tripe, as desperate young "actresses" trot about, until they suddenly realize they're able to untie themselves and escape (bright gals, eh?). The film gets high marks in the Intricate Leather Harnesses Department, but there's something downright pathetic about any filmmaker who figures they could make a quick buck by treating women like horses. And if you're desperate for more, there's even a PONY GIRL 2 (lucky us).

SEX KITTENS GO TO COLLEGE (1960). What a wonderful title for a shit awful movie! Of course, after the opening song "Sexpot Goes to College", what else could you expect outta this low-rent, dim-witted romp from Albert Zugsmith, who previously gave us such drive-in wonders as HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL, GIRLS TOWN and

CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER. This stinker makes all his other pics look like Cannes Palm D'Or, winners, but (on a sadistic note) it's fun to watch the large cast of familiar faces struggling with its sitcom-level humor. It begins when Thinko, the world's greatest electronic brain (a bank of flashing lights and a robot who looks like the 3rd cousin to Gort), picks the new head of the science department at the university. The winner is the ever-pneumatic Mamie Van Doren as Dr. Mathilda West, who comes complete with a 293 I.Q., a bagful of diplomas and a blouseful of charisma—with this busty blonde sending the entire campus into spasms of groanable double entendres. Mamie wears glasses to make herself look bright (but still can't manage a simple line reading), and the shit hits the fan when it's discovered that her last job was stripping under the nickname the "Tallahassee Tassel Tosser". Sprinkled throughout the tedium we get a pre-ADAM 12 Martin Milner as the college P.R. rep; Louis Nye as the computer geek in charge of Thinko; John Carradine as a horny biology professor who dances the Charleston with Van Doren; Vampira as a nurse; a cowboy-hatted Jackie Coogan parachuting onto campus; Conway Twitty onstage at the college hang-out, The Passion Pit; and Mijanou Bardot (riding on sister Brigitte's appeal) as a flirtatious French student. But my personal fave is drop-dead gorgeous, 17-year-old Tuesday Weld as a marching band member who can even make playing the triangle look sexy. Subplots

involve Tuesday flirting with football neanderthal "Woo Woo" Grabowski, a pair of bumbling gangsters, race track scams, and a chimpanzee assistant who wears glasses and types. And though the ads tried to make this dreck seem risqué, it's totally limp. The only surprise is the Thinko Sex Fantasy episode at the end, which has the Metal Man and the chim enjoying several strippers. I certainly didn't

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SEX KITTEN
—American
version
Mamie
Van Doren

**MAMIE
VAN DOREN
TUESDAY
WELD
INTRODUCING
MIJANOU
BARDOT**

SEX KITTEN
—Junior
Grade
Tuesday
Weld

**MIKEY
SHAUGHNESSY
LOUIS
NYE**

SEX KITTEN
—French
version
Mijanou
Bardot

**PAMELA MASON
AND MARTY MILNER
CONWAY TWITTY
JACKIE COOGAN
JOHN CARRADINE
VAMPIRA**

**more fun
than a barrel
of people!**

**THE TITLE OF THIS PICTURE
IS TOO HOT TO PRINT!**

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expect this topless finale, and it's the only part of the film with any real balls—especially when the dames pretend to dry hump the perplexed Thinko (but from what I can calculate from this print's 102 minute running time, this raunchy sequence was probably trimmed from most versions). This is one of the worst examples of Zugsmith underestimating the intelligence of the teenage public. And though loaded with admittedly bizarre cameos, nobody on-camera is given anything to do. It's the pits.

THE FANTASTIC FOUR (1993). If ever a movie deserved to be raked over the hot coals, this is it! Not only is it an insult to every geek who actually enjoys the original comic...Not only did Film Threat toss this bowel movement proudly on its cover...It's also dull as dirt, seemingly lensed on a four-dollar budget (my estimate is generous) and totally unreleasable. A major dud from executive producer Roger Corman (considering how many bombs he has under his belt, that's saying *plenty*) and director Oley Sassone (previously responsible for no-talent hack cable-fodder like *BLOODFIST III: FORCED TO FIGHT*), which makes other Marvel adaptations like Lou Ferrigno's *THE INCREDIBLE HULK* look like Tolstoy in comparison. After an interminable 15-minute flashback/intro to Reed Richards' college days (always smart to begin an action film with a deadening first reel, right?), we watch as the adult Richard (hence the white crap combed into his hair), brother/sisteam Johnny and Sue Storm, and musclehead Ben Grimm don aluminum foil space suits, take a quick jaunt into outer space, get bathed in radiation (cut to: cheesy 2001-style psychedelics), crash land, and tum into the Fantastic Four (at least the film got one thing right...There are four of 'em). Reed turns elastic, Sue can become invisible, Johnny flames into The Human Torch, and Ben is stuck inside an orange, cracked-latex bodysuit as The Thing. And the moment they appear in their polyester blue-and-white crime-fighting costumes, you realize what a pathetic bunch of useless super-assholes these guys are. Reed trips villains with his rubber legs, Ben whines about being ugly (what is this? *THE ELEPHANT MAN*?), Johnny is a 3rd rate Burt Ward, and Sue (since she's a girl) uses her powers to hide whenever things get too rough. Meanwhile, Doctor Doom, that metal-plated sociopath, sits in his posh Dictator's pad, plotting his revenge against Richards (who accidentally turned him into this burnt-faced "overgrown tin can"). Alex Hyde-White, Jay Underwood, Rebecca Staab, and Michael Bailey Smith star as the quartet, but don't look for their names on any marquees in the near future—they're more likely to get Employee of the Month at Denny's. Packed with dim-witted dialogue, cardboard sets, and saccharine tidbits (Ben's crush on a blind sculptor babe is particularly asinine), this is 89 minutes of G-rated pabulum that feels like a justifiably-ignored Saturday morning TV pilot. Reportedly, this pic will never officially see the light of day because another studio is planning a multi-million dollar version. And from that fact alone, I've realized that there *must* be a God, after all.

THE BLACK SLEEP (1956). Without question, this is a totally pathetic motion picture experience! Director Reginald DeBorg (*DAIRY OF A MADMAN*) started off on the right foot by hiring a stellar cast of aging horror vets, but this cheesy b&w idiocy doesn't leave one shred of their (admittedly waning) dignity intact. Set in the year 1872, Basil Rathbone stars as Dr. Cadman, an illustrious physician whose secret hobby is lording over his own private prison of brain-damaged freaks. Using a paralyzing East Indian potion, this closet psychopath fakes an individual's death, only to have them awaken from their mysterious "black sleep" and learn they've been added to Basil's menagerie of imprisoned misfits, located through a secret passage behind his fireplace. And when he can't obtain them himself, he's aided by a slimy Gypsy tattoo artist (Akim Tamiroff). Rathbone enjoys performing unorthodox brain surgery on his captives, with these human guinea pigs looking the worse for wear afterward (especially the bald

guy with the dripping face). But rather than disposing of 'em, stupid Basil keeps all his botched patients locked in the basement—thus prompting brief appearances from John Carradine (complete with Z.Z. Top hairpiece and matching beard), a blind Tor Johnson, and Lon Chaney Jr. as the "sub-human" Mongo, who chases the servant babes while doing a sad, 5th-rate knock-off of his *OF MICE AND MEN* routine. But if you *really* want a pathetic sight, there's also a breadstick-thin Bela Lugosi shuffling about in a morphine-haze as Basil's mute, decrepit butler (at least Ed Wood knew how to film the guy, so he didn't look like shit). And why is Basil dabbling in all this brainwork? To discover a way to revive his comatose wife, who's been laying in bed in her nightgown for the last 8 months. This pic would seem to have all the makings of a badfilm classic, except for the fact it's also excruciatingly dull. Sure, the cameos keep the amusement level up, but whenever the soppy drama intrudes, this flick lays there like day-old roadkill. At least the ending turns into a mutant free-for-all, with the inmates (all four of 'em) escaping, Tor and Lon wrestling each other, and Carradine screaming like a mad prophet while bashing folks with his staff. Too bad this prime material only last five minutes, leaving the viewer stranded throughout the previous, dismal hour-and-a-quarter.



CONTAMINATION [a.k.a Alien Contamination] (1981). First off, director Luigi Cozzi isn't fooling anyone with his Lewis Coates pseudonym. The guy has been cranking out badly-acted, monstrously-wrongheaded pics for years under both names, including *STARCRASH* (saved only by Caroline Munro's delightfully scant wardrobe) and the asinine Lou Ferrigno *HERCULES* duo. But this gore-infested Italian sci-fi somehow manages to transcend all its hokiness to become a goofy, ultra-bloody time killer. It begins when a ghost ship is sighted near New York City (an excuse for some bookending exterior shots of the place, in hopes of convincing slower

viewers that it's a U.S. production), totally empty of any passengers. When a quarantine-suited expedition boards the boat they discover the crew torn to shreds and a mysterious cache of glowing "eggs" hidden in crates of coffee. The random, senseless violence kicks in when these sacs start erupting in people's faces, because this deadly alien bacteria causes folks to explode—their innards bursting clean outta their torsos! Our trio of heroes include a Brooklyn Police Lieutenant who's being held in contamination, a Science Babe for the requisite sex appeal, and a down-and-out astronaut (Ian McCullough, best remembered for gut-munchers like ZOMBIE and DR. BUTCHER M.D.) who discovered an ice cave full of these eggs during a botched expedition to Mars. Confused yet? Wait until this trio journeys to South America for more answers, and encounters an anti-human conspiracy led by a missing member of that same creepy Mars mission. Of course, he's just following the hypnotic orders of a Martian cyclops monster, who enjoys ingested us tasty humans. Needless to say, this is all severely ridiculous. And wisely, Cozzi doesn't skimp on the bad taste, while lacing the ridiculous script with enough cheesy gut-bursting to keep you awake amidst the bad dubbing and workmanlike Goblin score. The uncut version is particularly graphic, and when scientists inject a white mouse with the alien germ (causing it to explode like a water balloon) I nearly coughed up a lung from laughing so hard. Nonsensical rotgut that's enjoyable in a braindead, gross-out, drunk-off-your-ass sorta way. What where you expecting, Sam Shepard?

VALERIE AND HER WEEK OF WONDERS [Valerie A Tyden Divu] (1970).

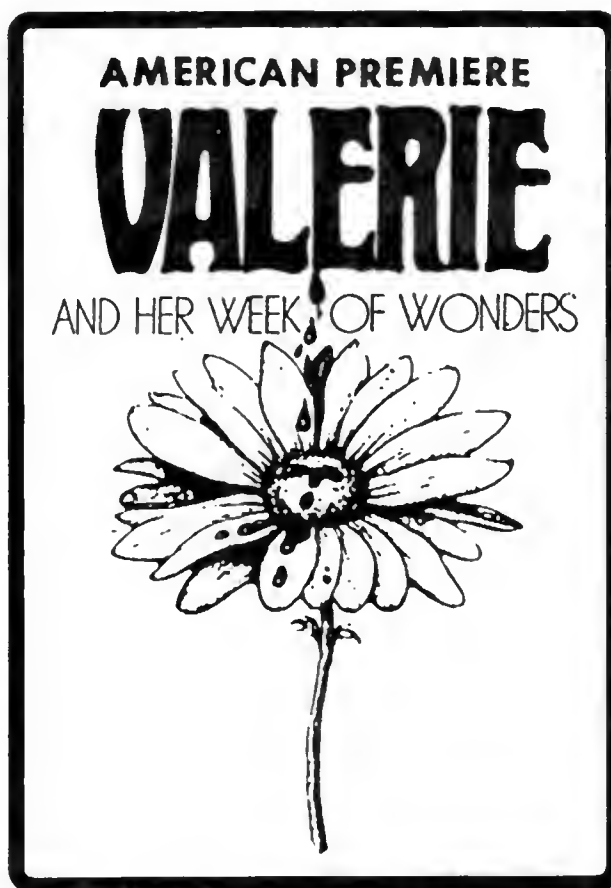
Yes, it's more Eastern Bloc arthouse foolishness. And though this extravagant mess might not make a lick of sense, it sure is damn pretty. Essentially, this chronicles a 19th century young girl's struggle with puberty, with Jaroslava Schallerova starring as the 13-year-old Valerie, who's deluged with a crockful of colorful fantasies (which look like an old Ingmar Bergman treatment as rewritten by Rinse Dream). Czech director Jaromil Jires displays a keen ability for unapologetic pretentiousness throughout, but his results are severely hit and miss—and for every lyrical moment that delves headfirst into the subconscious, we get the inevitable truckload of laughably sledgehammer surrealism. A pale, black-robed Devil-like figure (complete with a mouthful of rotted teeth), leads our pretty lass on her journey, by convincing her Grandmother to give him poor Valerie in exchange for her lost youth. From there on in, your guess of the "plot" is as good as mine. One moment Valerie is playing voyeur on the neighborhood wenches (who toss fish down their blouses while bathing in the creek) and the next, the horny local Priest intrudes into Val's bedroom for some private "contemplation". Meanwhile, Grandma's been turned into some kind of vampire; and that Devil guy might actually be Valerie's father, who raped a Nun (Mom, of course) while disguised as a Bishop. And what about Val's chaste lesbo kisses with another town cutie? Or will she simply be burnt in the town square for being a witch? Then again, maybe all this poetic nonsense is just a fuckin' rip-off dream, set off

by the fact the gal just got her first period. Personally, I love this type of wigged-out crap, and Jires has a field day with his camera (the thing is all over the place—in the dirt, on the bedroom ceiling, you name it) and his striking sets (Valerie's bedroom is so Virginal White it's scary). And even though the potential for lurid, sadistic, jailbait trash is always on the horizon (quick glimpses of Val with her clothes off, a little incest subtext), Jires unfortunately takes the high road all the way, thus limiting the flick's drive-in potential. As heavy-handed art flicks go, it's beautifully crafted, lovingly bizarre and so brief you never have time to get bored with its psyche-driven silliness.

VAMPIRE VIXENS FROM VENUS (1994) and ATTACK OF THE 60 FOOT CENTERFOLD (1995).

Let's kill two bombs with one stone. Because although both straight-to-video pics feature up-and-coming jiggle queen J.J. North and aging, implant-spokesmodel Michelle Bauer, the main similarity is that they both reek like a runny beer shit. Sure, if you're hard up for generic T&A (and wanna keep your thumb on the Fast Forward button throughout), you might get a chuckle out of this inane mindrot. But it also makes you yearn for sexploitation with an I.Q. slightly larger than their lead bimbo's chest measurement. Ted A. Bohus gets the dubious honor of directing the first,

which should've been entitled BLONDE, BIG-TITTED ALIEN IDIOTS (it probably would've been more successful that way). A trio of Venusians, who look like walking hemorrhoids, arrive on earth via crude Transporter Beam FX, transform into buxom sluts, flag down some New Jersey scum by hitchhiking with their blouses open, and use a pair of intergalactic stereo headphones to turn men into gooey, oozing lumps (as a cop appropriately puts it, "a large pink raisin in a Hawaiian shirt"). Then they steal their victims' bodily fluids and sell it as a drug back home. J.J. North, Theresa Lynn and Leslie Glass star as the vapid invaders, with the second-billed Michelle Bauer only taking off her top once as a nice girl who falls for the dimwitted detective. And somehow, thoroughly bored Michelle manages a strained smile during all the tit jokes directed at her. This has less technical finesse than a porno film (it's always a sign of professionalism when the opening credits are crooked on the screen) and looks like it was cranked out during a slow weekend in Jersey. Complete with special effects so chintzy even Al Adamson wouldn't have the nerve to fob 'em off on the



viewer, plus a cameo by painfully frail Charlie Callas and his comb-over hair-do. Avoid it like you would an Eddie Deezen porno film... At least director Fred Olen Ray has been making crappy movies long enough to know how to do it right, with CENTERFOLD featuring enough fleshy, slo-mo close-ups of blonde bimchette J.J. North to keep his horny, shut-in viewers content. And though I agree it's time for some fresh meat in the schlock market (if over-the-hill Linnea Quigley takes off her top one more time and shakes her scrawny wares, I think I'm gonna go blind), it's sad to think that voluptuous (but painfully vapid) J.J. is the best they could find amongst the wealth of strippers, ex-porn-stars and teenage runaways. J.J. plays Angel, a model in competition for Plaything's Centerfold of the Year, who

overdoses on an experimental beauty drug which makes her grow to enormous proportions (but keeps her brain the size of a walnut). And once she's in this over-developed state, her slimy Hefner-esque editor decides to exploit her gigantic charms. The effects are crude, relying more on North's tendency to grow out of her skimpy wardrobe, plus a slapdash array of wall-to-wall lingerie, insipid romance, and a giant catfight finale through the streets of the city. Strangely enough, this is one of the few movies where Michelle Bauer (hamming it up as a lab assistant) keeps all her clothes on—which only makes you wonder why they hired the ol' gal in the first place. Then again, Fred loves to litter his cast with faces from the past (George Stover, Russ Tamblyn, Stanley "MY THREE SONS" Livingston, and BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLL's John LaZar), so that might explain why Bauer's on board. If you're silly enough to a rent video with this title, you get exactly what you deserve.

CISCO PIKE (1971). In the late '60s, every studio was searching for a lock on the youth market and the next EASY RIDER cash cow. But after these counterculture filmmakers were given carte blanche, the doddering studio heads usually took one look and dumped the flick without a lick of support. For example, just look at Monte Hellman's TWO LANE BLACKTOP, Jack Nicholson's DRIVE, HE SAID, Paul Mazursky's ALEX IN WONDERLAND, and this equally amazing gem from first-timer Bill W.L. Norton. Publicized by Columbia Pictures like it was just another cop flick, it's actually a brilliant portrait of a generation gone to seed, featuring enough casual drug use to make you misty-eyed for the good ol' days. Kris Kristofferson made his screen debut in the title role (also singing a quartet of badly-aged tunes), as a once-sorta-successful musician who's back on the street after a couple busts for dealing grass. At first glance this seems like a laid-back look at Cisco trying to pull his life back together with the help of girlfriend Karen Black. But enter Officer Leo Holland, a cruel fuck of a cop played by a pre-stardom Gene Hackman, who offers the reluctant Pike a deal. You see, Hackman's got 100 kilos of prime weed and wants Cisco to blow it out to all his old clients over a record-setting weekend, in order to provide Gene with an off-the-books pension fund. Of course, Pike is a tad leery of the situation, but gradually warms to it when Hackman begins shoving his gun up Cisco's nose. Soon Kris is lugging the bricks around in his guitar case and tracking down every quirky, burn-out in town—even making a sale to The Sir Douglas Quintet in the middle of a recording session. The story has a low key, naturalistic approach which really captures Cisco's lifestyle, but Hackman continually ignites it into more than just a solid Dealer McDope adventure. And even though it ends with a standard cops 'n' robbers finale, the flick never forgets the fragile desperation of that lost generation. Unfortunately, Norton never topped this debut, moving onto Disney dreck like BABY...THE SECRET OF THE LOST LEGEND. And nowadays, Kristofferson is such a craggy hack you tend to forget his solid '70s work, such as BLUME IN LOVE, PAT

GARRETT AND BILLY THE KID and this rough gem. It's an authentic cultural artifact, with a supporting cast that seems to know the territory from first hand experience. Karen Black is at her most likeably ditz, even during her romantic tiffs with Kris over his re-entry into the drug trade. There's also Viva and Joy Bang as fringe groupies; Antonio Fargas as Brother Buffalo, another dealer; while Harry Dean Stanton is incredible as a skagged-out ex-band mate of Pike's. Best of all, after the last decade of anti-drug propaganda, it's refreshing to watch a movie that makes casual drug use as common as lighting up a Marlboro. The only depressing part is hearing 'em all talk about kilos selling for under \$200. Man, do I hate inflation.

KARAMOJA! (1952). When it came to early exploitation, good ol' Kroger Babb was one of the Royal Family. This guy could take a virtually unwatchable melodrama, spice it up by editing in a little tawdry footage or giving it a lurid ad campaign, and then four-wall it across the South to sell-out crowds. And though best known for his Birth of a Baby movie, MOM AND DAD, this later travelogue demonstrates that the guy really had balls. Because even though audiences were forewarned to expect a no-holds-barred documentary on African life (which usually meant some tepid National Geographic-level nudity), this brainburner must've had viewers shitting their drawers at its unapologetic barrage of graphic weirdness. And

though not the first jungle life expose, this early candidate for the MONDO CANE Hall of Fame is surely one of the best, complete with a cameraman who lovingly lingers on gross-out close-ups (in beautiful 16mm color, no less). The movie is (supposedly) narrated by an American tourist, Dr. William Treutle, who filmed his visit to a tribe of primitive Africans living in a remote region of the Belgian Congo. These wacky "Karamojans" aren't your normal bunch of hut-dwelling natives (you know, like they are on GILLIGAN'S ISLAND), because even though Treutle assures us they're "not a sadistic people", his camera revels in tribal scarification, cow mutilation, and the heartwarming sight of a little boy's bottom teeth torn out to make room for his Lip Plug. In the interest of gratuitous ethnocentrism, we're also shown how uncivilized they are by watching 'em spread feces on each other and drink blood. And even though the movie doesn't outwardly make fun of the tribe, it exploits their lifestyle for all it's worth, while lacing the proceedings with constant full frontal nudity (male and female) and limp jokes. They also pad it out to a full hour with Karamojan beer-making techniques, goat butchering, dental hygiene, and young brides anointing themselves with rancid butter. This is all pretty goofy, but you have to admire how

Kroger Babb pushed the envelope of good taste in order to make a fast buck. This came out in an era when FROM HERE TO ETERNITY was considered too racy because Burt and Deborah roll around on the beach together—while on the bottom rung of the industry, Babb was proudly slapping his name on movies that had mens' dicks swinging about in the wind. Now *that's* showmanship!



HELL RIDERS (1984). This is one of the funniest damned movies I've seen all year. Unfortunately, I think the lame-ass filmmakers were trying to make a serious biker/action pic. On the surface, it looks like just another chunk of drive-in trash—an ultra-cheap throwback to that beloved genre from the late '60s. But the fact it stars two of America's fave TV icons, Adam West and Tina Louise, makes this embellished home movie an instant shit classic! As biker pics go, this one makes *THE WILD ANGELS* look like Oscar material, with director James Bryan (*DON'T GO IN THE WOODS*) indulging in plenty of Redneck Cracker humor (which will make you yearn for pithy wit of *PORKY'S*) and one-take ineptitude (chopping off the tops of actors' heads, the stunt doubles looking nothing whatsoever like the actors, et cetera). Tina stars as Claire, who's driving cross country from Vegas when she's attacked by Snake (Russ Alexander) and his Hell Riders, a motley band of biker road rats, who drag her through the dirt and piss on her car. Enter Adam West (first glimpsed jogging, wouldya believe?) as the heroic Doctor Dave, the physician of a piss-ant, one-block town that looks suspiciously like a long-deserted backlot. Unfortunately, neither Tina nor Adam get much screen time for the first hour, which is instead devoted to this sad excuse for a gang, armed with plastic (retractable) knives. Snake announces he wants to be "Adolph Hitler, Rommel and Bela Lugosi, all rolled up into one shit-covered gob," and his crew of sadists aren't exactly Rhodes Scholars—spending their afternoons beating the bejesus out of each other, keeping a naked blond on a leash, and having Stabbing Contests to see who's the toughest halfwit. Of course, the tormented townsfolk are no better, looking like they stepped out of *THE DUKES OF HAZARD*. When tempers begin to flare, West steps in to save the day, beating up Snake during a diner rumble and doing his damndest to keep a straight face while the locals fight back. And when the suave Adam finally meets Tina, their immediate, saccharine attraction will make you wanna retch. Both look worse for wear, embarrassed as hell, and they couldn't have earned more than car fare from this dimstore dreck. West is tired and chicken-necked, while Tina's got that greasy, preserved look that ex-sex symbols seem to acquire. On the plus side, the film is loaded with nudity. On the negative, it's not from Tina or Adam, but from the dumpy supporting cast. Still, this truly inept movie has the distinction of being the first biker movie where the gang kills their own leader out of sheer boredom. I only wish I could've done the same to the filmmakers.

VOODOO SOUP (1994; HomeFront Features, 160 N. Fairview, Ste. 107, Santa Barbara, CA 93117). Don't get suckered in by this one, kids. It reeks! Sure, director Greg Lewolt can whip up a sexy, color video cover with a half naked babe and a cast of Playboy Lingerie bimbos, but the moment you stick this in your VCR, you'll realize its nothing but a grainy, Super 8 excuse to watch a bunch of broads in various stages of undress. Of course, there's nothing wrong with that if it actually gets you off, but even the most hard-

up, desperate video slob will have a better time renting a goddamn porno film and wanking off instead of trudging through this inane, 110 minute home movie. Lewolt co-stars (along with a bevy of soon-to-be Vegas cocktail waitresses) as Ralph, a Voodoo cook for Selena, a queen vampire. And therein lies the series of disjointed "comic" episodes. He trains a novice vampiress by rolling about, half-dressed, in shaving cream; soaps their backs in the bathtub; makes out with many of 'em; as well as any excuse for these interchangeable, 5th rate models to rub themselves against Lewolt's pasty flesh. Lewolt can't even stick to his simple premise of running a cannibal catering service for competing vampire dames, lamely tossing in a detective on Lewolt's trail, relocated native cannibals, a silent western parody, rancid gay stereotypes, et cetera. You'll never be able to figure out the plot (as if you really cared), and though the ladies try their best (Joanna Taylor and Darlene Sellers emerge relatively unscathed), they're shot like shit, squeezed into garage sale lingerie, and have that multi-implanted porn-booth quality. The entire production is so inept you'd feel sorry for the gals, if only you weren't so pissed off at yourself for getting suckered into watching this limp, vanity production. A dull, humorless, tit 'n' cleavage showcase that should be avoided at all costs.

FIVE (1951). Famed radio producer Arch Oboler tried his hand at directing several quirky B-movies (*BWANA DEVIL*, *THE TWONKY*, *THE BUBBLE*), and though none were wholeheartedly successful, *FIVE* is best remembered as one of the earliest post-apocalyptic pics—proudly leading the onslaught of '50s end-of-mankind flicks to come. This "story about the day after tomorrow" begins with A-bomb footage, photos of world capitals covered in noxious vapor, and only a handful of survivors on the bone-strewn streets (strangely enough, the skeletons are still wearing their clothes). But most of the movie takes place at Oboler's actual home, designed by the always eccentric Frank Lloyd Wright. William Phipps stars as Michael, the last resident of New York City, who's now living in the middle of the countryside by himself—but not for long. First he takes in bedraggled Rosanne (Susan Douglas), who he unsuccessfully tries to get into the sack. The party grows with the appearance of an old codger, a black man, and a roving scientist (who represents the cold, cruel logic which led to the world's current state). All of these stereotypes (*The Earth Mother*, *The Happy Negro*, *The Evil Scientist*—gosh, it's almost like a doomsday version of *GILLIGAN'S ISLAND*) were saved from Armageddon by some idiotic twist of fate (locked in a bank vault, left in a lead-lined hospital room), then somehow manage to accidentally run into each other in the middle of nowhere. So what do they do? They talk about their inhumanity. They talk about the future of civilization. They talk about leaving their safe rural abode and searching the cities. In fact, they talk so goddamn much you wish they'd shut the fuck up and pass out from radiation poisoning! Just because they're the last survivors doesn't give 'em the right to gab all day long, and

ONE
One girl...the last left on Earth!

TWO
Two hours of the most spell-binding entertainment ever filmed!

THREE
A story of the three elemental passions
...Love, Hate, Fear!

FOUR
Four men...alone with the knowledge that
in all the world there is only one woman!

FIVE
COLUMBIA PICTURES presents
Written, directed and produced by radio's famed dramatist, ARCH OBOLER!
Especially selected as the first attraction of the new and unique
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personally, I'd crawl under a rock and die if I had to hang out with these halfwits for the rest of my life. Even though I appreciated its anti-military message and grim tone (no sugar coating here, kids), nothing happens with these stiffies. They grow some crops, Rosanne gives birth, and it only picks up speed when that sinister Man of Science gets a gun and goes after the lone dame. Unfortunately, instead of the epic Oboler had obviously hoped to create, this long-winded morality play (complete with fuckin' Bible quotes at the end) is more often just an Epic Bore.



PANIC IN YEAR ZERO! (1962). The Cold War Era was ripe with End of the World science fiction films, but who would have thought those cut-rate clods at American International would churn out this ruthless li'l vision, which still packs a sizable punch over three decades later. Directed and starring Oscar-winner Ray Milland, the film may be low on scientific fact, but (better still) is high on the savage reality of once mild-mannered citizens stepping on each other in order to save their middle-class asses. It begins with Milland and his typical nuclear unit (compassionate yet vapid wife Jean Hagen, teenaged son Frankie Avalon, and the obligatory pretty young daughter) on the outskirts of Los Angeles with their trailer home. Suddenly, a series of blinding explosions appear on the horizon, and when the radio informs 'em that their world is turning to rubble, Ray begins stockpiling food and weapons, hopping from truck stop diners to backwater towns, looking for somewhere to ride out the chaos to come. Avoiding the politics of the situation, this film goes for a smaller, grittier portrait of one family's struggle to make its way to safety, even if they have to piss on everyone else while doing so. A dark, terrific glimpse at how humans react in the face of crisis, and how civilized behavior goes out the door the moment the bombs begin landing in your backyard. In particular, Milland's character is a cruel fuck, blithely tossing aside his Ward Cleaver warmth in order to pull a gun on a defenseless storekeeper or lecture his family on the necessity of violent self-defense. The story bogs down a bit when the quartet take up residence in a deserted

cave in the middle of the countryside, eventually defending themselves against generic juvenile delinquents. And even if the ending is totally hokey, this is still an intelligent tale that lacks the saccharine edge which has curdled other similar-themed pics. At its core, Milland is terrific in the lead, playing an everyman taken to his breaking point, turning into a cold-blooded killer in the process. It almost makes you wish he'd stuck with directing instead of taking the easy money by playing hack villains in tripe like *FROGS* and *ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN*. Hell, even Frankie Avalon, in a pre-BEACH BLANKET BINGO role, isn't the smarmy shitheap he normally is.

NO BLADE OF GRASS (1970). Cornel Wilde is best remembered for acting gigs in '50s pics like *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH* and *THE BIG COMBO*, but few realize that he also found time to direct several brutal li'l favorites, like *THE NAKED PREY*, *BEACH RED* and this somber sci-fi tale, based on John Christopher's novel, "The Death of Grass". Unfortunately, MGM dumped this cruel, End of Mankind adventure on the bottom half of double bills (in N.Y.C. it played with Stacy Keach's weird-assed *THE TRAVELING EXECUTIONER*), preferring to toss their publicity machine behind *THE OMEGA MAN*, which they released the following year. Of the two, *this* is the real item—a depressing, brutal look at the demise of man with a weighty ecological message to boot. The story begins in a London of the near future, just after a worldwide virus (brought on by man's trashing of the planet) has begun killing off all the plants. And I guess eye-patched patriarch Nigel Davenport must've seen *PANIC IN YEAR ZERO*, because he follows the same route of packing up his family (including nubile daughter Lynne Frederick—you might as well hang a sign saying "Rape Me" round her neck), stockpiling guns, splitting famine-racked London just before martial law is announced, and heading toward his brother's secluded farm. But events take a brutal turn when our 'heroes' get to murder soldiers who are blockading the road to the countryside, and when a gang of grubby bikers (refugees from a U.S. drive-in movie?) kidnap and screw the women (even Mom!). Davenport eventually amasses a ragtag army of farmers and stragglers, all pinning their hopes for survival on his one pitiful chunk of safe farmland. Sure, it's standard stuff, but the tale works because Wilde truly believes in his corrosive portrait of mankind's inherent selfishness. Just don't let its occasional moment of sledgehammer silliness (the beginning features a vomitable Eco-Folk song, accompanied by images of dead fish, scattered garbage and the only thing missing is a teary ol' Indian) turn you off though, because this is pessimistic stuff. Constant radio bulletins describe riots over food, tales of cannibalism and rumors that the British gov't is planning to nerve gas the cities. And even Mom (Jean Wallace, Wilde's real-life wife) guns down a punk at close range when she gets pissed off. Nicely filmed and bleak as hell, this apocalyptic road movie stands the test of time, thanks to its lack of sanctimonious pabulum (well, at least until the end. But I guess nobody's perfect).

HOUSE OF HORRORS (1946). Yes, we all love those early Universal horror flicks. But they weren't always such classy items featuring Bela, Boris and Lon Jr., especially in the '40s, when their monster franchises began running dry and they cranked out some of their goofier vehicles. But what makes this B-movie stand the test of time is a lovably ludicrous storyline that mixes modern art with murder (and would make a cool double bill with Corman's *A BUCKET OF BLOOD*). Martin Kosleck (*THE FLESH EATERS*) stars as Marcel DeLange, a French sculptor living in Greenwich Village, whose forte is creating ugly globs of human-like clay. Of course, this self-proclaimed "genius" (what N.Y.C. artist isn't?) is on the verge of starving, and when a snobby art critic denounces his latest work as garbage (which it is), DeLange freaks out. But as fate would have it, only moments before tossing himself into a watery grave, Marcel spots someone in the river and saves *their* life instead—and a huge

someone it is! The rescued guy turns out to be a wanted murderer nicknamed The Creeper, played by the unforgettable Rondo Hatton, who was a villainous fixture of low-budgeters due to his physical deformity from acromegalia. DeLange takes The Creeper back to his hovel and they quickly become friends, with Rondo becoming Marcel's grotesque model for a sculpture of "the perfect neanderthal". In return, Hatton takes a break from snapping ladies' spines to kill the snobby critic (Alan Napier, two decades prior to playing Alfred to Adam West's Batman) who's been delaying DeLange's fame and fortune. Hatton's a monosyllabic brute, Kosleck is a babbling egotist, and these two clods make a wild team (director Jean Yarbrough went onto several Abbott and Costello outings, but I'd give my left nut to see Kosleck & Hatton starring in *HERE COME THE CO-EDS* instead of *Bud & Lou*). Kosleck is a four-star loonie, and Rondo (who passed away soon afterward) is just plain lovable in the best role of his career—playing a misguided killer who's got a good heart, no morals and a face only Richard Kiel could love. Unfortunately, the rest of the sub-standard subplots keep intruding on the fun, including top-billed Robert Lowery as a successful artist (hence his bevy of scantily dressed models) who's accused of the killings. Still, ignore its groanable, generic side and enjoy the barrage of slimy critics, wiseass cops, cheap dames, and a unintentionally perceptive view of the crackpot art world.

DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE GIRL BOMBS [Le Spie vengono dal semifreddo] (1966).

Back in the '60s, everybody was jumping on the James Bond bandwagon, and leave it to American-International to come up with the most asinine entries of 'em all. Their first hoot, *DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE BIKINI MACHINE* [SC#2], featured Vincent Price as the power mad Goldfoot and Frankie Avalon as a secret agent. Well, Vincent returned to collect another quick pay-check in this sequel, complete with fab smoking jacket, curly gold Aladdin slippers, and another half-assed plan to take over the world. But this time he has cream-of-wheat-bland Fabian as the American agent on his trail (what happened? Did Avalon discover his first and only smidgen of self-respect?). The story has Goldfoot

and his Chinese crew of scientists creating a bevy of gold-bikined seductresses who explode the moment they kiss someone, then Goldfoot ships these self-destructive sirens off to horny, NATO Generals. Once they're all dead, Price disguises himself as the only remaining officer (an eye-patched U.S. general, also played by Vincent), with plans to send a U.S. Superbomb toward the Kremlin and start World War 3—with the remains of the planet ruled by him and his Red Chinese cronies. Sounds moronic? Damn right! Happily, Price brings the only class to this celluloid cretin-fest, playing a lovably "twisted genius" who has a secret tunnel coming up under his bathroom mat, a cement pond full of piranhas, and who, when the world is divvied up, wants dibs on all the Playboy clubs. I was hoping the film might get a burst of Euro-trash allure from director Mario Bava, who transplants the proceedings to Rome and packs with cast

with Italian babes. Unfortunately, Bava is on auto-pilot throughout, and his only good idea is casting sexpot Laura Antonelli as the often-lingered Rosanna, long before melting arthouse hearts in *PASSION D'AMORE* and *THE INNOCENT*. Laura tests out her humorous side when she's duplicated into a lusty Girl Bomb, but Bava's heavyhanded comic stylings (sped-up photography, amusement park plugs, rear-projection chases) makes the whole thing feel like a Monkees episode with Price as the Special Guest Star. Worse still is the wasteland of laffs courtesy of a pair of bumbling Italian dolts who make Roberto Benigni seem like he's on Laudanum. Complete with Antonio Rinaldi cinematography and a theme song by The Sloopys, this is a dirt cheap (but nostalgic) trip back into Italo-Sex-Farce land.

SUCCUBUS [a.k.a. *Necronomicon*] (1967). You can always rely on Jess Franco for a healthy dose of nicely-lensed deviance, and although the guy has cranked out over 150 flicks, this is one of the few to get a halfway-decent theatrical release in the States. And don't let the X-rating fool you, because this was released in the days when even studio fare like *MIDNIGHT COWBOY* got an 'X' by the human-

slugs at the MPAA, so don't expect anything *really* provocative. In fact, compared to Franco's later *Women in Prison* trash, this will seem like a Merchant Ivory production. Franco would like to convince you that this film is some sort of pretentious arthouse fare, but the moment it cuts to extras being chained up and tortured, you know you're in store for a typical Euro-trash field day, basted with enough half-baked psychodrama to (almost) convince you the movie is about something other than cut-rate titillation. Janine Reynaud (*CASTLE OF THE CREEPING FLESH*) plays Lorna, who stars in a sadomasochistic stagematinee for wealthy slobs. But when she's not stripping for her boyfriend/manager, Lorna drifts off into an erotic dreamworld (which looks suspiciously like most other late-'60s, erotic dreamworlds), except hers has insipid narration from Reynaud herself, promising she's "the essence of evil, a devil on Earth". Uhh, not exactly. She's actually just a traumatized nympho wandering through the backstreets of Lisbon,



encountering robed figures and funeral mourners who all look like they're on a lunch break from Corman's *THE TRIP*. Let's not forget Franco-regular Howard Vernon, who has a silly volley of verbal foreplay with Reynaud, before she stabs the guy in the eye. Or did she only imagine that? Or do we really care? Reynaud looks the part (complete with Big Hair & Slutty Wardrobe) and there are a few weird scenes sprinkled throughout (like an attack by naked female mannequins). But mostly, this is tame sexploitation of a woman grappling with her confused sexuality (yawn), complete with mock-artsy sex scenes shot through a fish tank (no, Jess, we actually wanna see the people fucking...) and droning commentary from her shrink. Hard to believe, but even the lesbo subplot is a snooze. On the surface, this might look like top-notch trash, but underneath, it's nothing but cheese, still cluttering the shelf long past its expiration date.

TROG (1970). In the mood for a studio misfire? Here it is! As an additional treat, this "beast in civilization" horror yarn features that down-on-her-luck-of' broad, Joan Crawford, in her last (not to mention, most asinine) film. The story begins when a team of British explorers check out an underwater cave and discover a short, hairy missing link (no, not Bob Hoskins), who doesn't like visitors and promptly beats one dude's face to a pulp. Luckily, Crawford is on hand as Dr. Brockton, a scientist hag who wears frumpy pants suits, too much eyeliner and sports a strawberry blonde dye job. She promptly sends the critter to Dreamland with a handy tranquilizer gun, totes him back to her lab, where she can feed him lizards and regale us with her humanistic slop. Of course, when this long-haired, low-browed troglodyte (cleverly nicknamed Trog) is brought back to civilization, this half-pinted ape man become a cause celebre—even though he occasionally loses his grip and throttles a supporting actor. Unfortunately, instead of action packed carnage, all we get is pseudo-scientific jargon and a two-ton social message about prejudice. And although it's a hoot to hear Joan ramble on about appealing to Trog's human side (too bad she didn't do the same to her real-life daughter), I kept hoping this squat hairball would break free, go on a murderous rampage, and shut them all up. Instead, director Freddie Francis spews out one of his most generic efforts, complete with inane lab experiments, operating room implants and a tedious courtroom debate. It's only during the final 15 minutes that Trog gets to run amok, kill a few villagers and send Scotland Yard into a tizzy with his too-little-too-late low-rent rampage (though I must admit, I liked his Butcher Shop meathook murder). Amidst all the sledgehammer Frankenstein allusions, Michael Gough co-stars as an ol' party-poopster who wants Trog on a lab slab, but the only real fun is from the kitsch value of seeing Joan struggling to keep her dignity, even as this ill-mannered li'l half-human steals every scene from her. If you haven't gotten the message yet, it's total crap.

MISCELLANEOUS INDEPENDENT ODDITIES: Here's a sampling of a few underground videos that have turned up on my doorstep recently. So if any of 'em sound good (and since *you've* probably got more money than the filmmakers do), why don't buy their goddamn movies? (How's that for a soft sell?)...First off, Joe Christ is back (in a priest collar, no less) in **SEX, BLOOD AND MUTILATION (1995; Joe Christ, 151 First Ave. #77, New York, NY 10003)**, hosting a 40-minute, mondo-documentary which takes a different route from his usual weird 'n' wired romps by digging into the Modern Primitive lifestyle. And you can tell this is an upscale production because he's found an attractive woman to dance naked over the credits. Genesis P-Orridge kicks off the shindig by coming on stage like a cast-off from **RAPANUI**, later showing off his much-pierced genitalia (which looks like some kind of bizarre Home Shopping Network wind chime), explaining how it feels to have all this metal crammed through your dick, and getting a blonde dame to slice up his entire arm with a razor.

Next, we go to Coney Island to meet Tattoo Mike Wilson. And although known for his head-to-foot body art, who could've guessed he also likes to eat live worms and stick his hands into animal traps? This leads to notorious Screw Magazine-maniac David Aaron Clark getting needles shoved through his eyebrows and across his back by his girlfriend. Finally, Christ profiles an anonymous guy who's had his penis cut off—and *likes* it that way. Lacking Christ's older gutter laughs, this informative portrait of flesh reformation is best appreciated by the already converted...I

WAS A TEENAGE SERIAL KILLER (1992; StationWagon Productions, P.O. Box 471807, San Francisco, CA 94147) sounds like just another goofy psycho pic, but director/writer/photographer/editor Sarah Jacobson kicks some serious ass during this 25-minute, b&w blast. It's a hilarious portrait of gutter life at its most volatile—as well as a gorgeous burst of primal rage that immediately puts Jacobson at the top of the underground heap. Kristine Calabrese stars as a woman fed up with men, and when her boyfriend secretly takes off his condom during sex, she strangles the asshole. Later, when some clown screams "nice ass", she pushes him in front of an oncoming truck. She even teams up for with a sexually-confused male serial killer, who only slaughters straight males (only to get pissed off when he brings home a woman to torture and rape). Thankfully, this isn't some deadening feminist bullshit, because Calabrese gets to swig beers and get butt nekkid throughout. Crude, non-sync and with emulsion scratches galore, but like Richard Kern's best work, Jacobson's flick

From a million years back...
Horror explodes into today!



TROG

A HERMAN COHEN PRODUCTION

STARRING **JOAN CRAWFORD**

has an urgent glow, an eye for twisted human suffering, and an appreciation for good ol' fashioned violence 'n' bloodshed...**THE ADVENTURES OF EL FRETICO AND GO-GIRL (1993; Amusement Films, 153 East 87th St. 4A, New York, NY 10128)** is a surprisingly deft goof on those wondrous Santo-style Mexican wrestling superhero pics, and director Pat Bishow obviously has a love for that cheeseball genre. It begins when the mega-wealthy, power-mad snack food magnate Heinrich Syphon decides to take over the world by filling his fast food deserts with Formula 28V, which changes living tissue into edible wax. Unfortunately, the only person who can save the city is professional goodguy El Fretico, who has become a fat cynical barfly (first glimpsed passed out on the bar, still in his blue and yellow wrestling mask). "To hell with the people," he rants when the red-leotarded Go-Girl first asks for his aid, but she eventually lures him back into the limelight, amidst corny special effects, lame fight choreography, and cut-rate silliness. Starring Charles Pellegrino, Frances Lee, and most importantly, Jon Sanborne, who overacts so ravenously you'd think he was auditioning for a Special Guest Villain gig on the old Batman TV show. A wacky tribute that's brief, dopey and best enjoyed with several beers under your belt...**PSYCHEDELIC GLUE SNIFFIN' HILLBILLIES (1993; Face Attack Films, P.O. 16434, Baltimore, MD 21217)** is Craig Smith's half hour ode to white trash aesthetics and copious drug intake. It's a great title for a giant mess—a crude, tripped-out melange that promises a "cinema verite

trip into...psyched out rural USA". Too bad I didn't get the point for one fucking instant, despite hours of pre-viewing alcohol intake. Craig simply tosses everything and a bag of hallucinogens into the mix, without any rhyme or reason. We get home movies of ugly, unintelligible hicks swilling Milwaukee's Best and vying for the Most Likely to In-Breed Award; guys dancing about in cheap rubber monster masks; geeky cowboy singers; nekkid writhing babes; the cowpoke anti-acid jingle "LSD Made a Wreck of Me"; plus the only glue sniffin' is provided by some clown in a Madball mask. The entire cast has the combined I.Q. of a 5 pound bag of potatoes, and you get the feeling Craig took too much of something while lensing this...Back in SC#5, I ballyhooed Danny Plotnick's mini-epics **PILLOW TALK** and **DUMBASS FROM DUNDAS**, and now he's making the rounds with **PIPSQUEAK PLOLLIES** (1994; 3375 22nd Street #1, San Francisco, CA 94110), a half-hour short starring a cast of detestable rugrats. The action is broken into three episodes, the first featuring Ray Wilcox as an adult whose trip to the laundromat is ruined by obnoxious half-pints who steal his detergent and hog-tie him in the street (sorta like *The Little Rascals* starring in *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*). Part Two features a montage of child interviews, with these whiny little kids spouting their opinions on how sick they are of being bossed around by adults (Boo hoo...Get a fuckin' job then). And for the satisfying wrap-up, Wilcox is given the upper hand against these unruly brats. This film is fun in a featherweight sort of way, Wilcox is terrific as both victim and triumphant victor, and the kids

truly seem to enjoy their unruly duties. But personally, I hate children so damned much I wanted 'em all to fall into a vat of sulfuric acid...**WALLS IN THE CITY** (1994; Provisional, P.O. Box 476750, Chicago, IL 60647) is Jim Sikora's best work yet—an hour-long glimpse into emotional despair and the bottom of the bottle. It's *Lifestyles of the Fucked Up* and *Penniless* time, featuring three seedy mini-dramas owing much to Charles "Chuckles" Bukowski (the middle one is based on a story of his). The first, "A Fly on the Wall", is a no-budget *BARFLY*, drifting from a local tavern to a floozy's pad. Next, "Love, After the Walls Close In" is a romantic slice-of-lowlife about a drunk, abusive, screwed up couple. But the best is saved for last, with "One Time She Played the B-Side" featuring a basketcase dame who encounters a blue collar shitheel. And as she evolves from potential barroom pick-up, to platonic roommate, to a blind fuck in the night, Sikora expertly captures those wicked moments when tempers ignite. High praise goes to Paula Killen for playing the female lead

in each story, and although the dialogue is often on the ripe side, Sikora finds raw truth in their silences, drunken moments and Salvation Army wardrobe...**HALF DEAD** (1994; Mike Trippiedi, 802 Frank Drive, Champaign, IL 61821; \$14) is a crude hoot, and though only 17 minutes long, it's saddled with enough storyline and evil little twists to fill an entire feature. Writer/director Trippiedi's latest work is an immoral chunk of murder and manipulation, tightly wound

and with a cartoony veneer. Anne Shapland Kearns stars as a woman with an inoperable tumor, who decides to murder her smug, back-stabbing female competitor at the Real Estate Office. After practicing homicide on a hooker, she runs into another murderer—a guy who has just killed his own wife and wants his terminally ill new friend to take the rap. From there it gets even sillier, with loads of cool corpse sight gags, grim death humor, not to mention using frozen ground beef as a murder weapon. The cast is up to their task, chewing on their roles with unexpected exuberance, and it's all amusingly silly and lensed with plenty of gusto...**ALIEN SEX PHONE PSYCHO** (1994; Surf Reality, P.O. Box 207088, Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009) is the latest shoestring endeavor from those masters of East Village video dementia, Surf Reality (*DICK AND JANE DROP ACID AND DIE*). And this looks like their biggest production yet—in other words, they spent more than a weekend making it. It begins when a guy is found dead in his pad, covered in blood and green goo, with his pants around his legs and an off-the-hook phone beside him. As similar victims are found, Detective Katie Reilly (Linda Hill) links their demises to a 1-900-ORGASM phone sex line and an alien scheme to lure in horny rubes with an enticing TV commercial. Better still, the entire production is framed like a TV monster movie, complete with a horror host and hilarious commercial parodies. In addition, this fly-by-night romp features an alien spaceship which looks suspiciously like a silver-painted dildo, cops caked in donut powder, and a psychedelic alien

HQ run by a slobbering, multi-armed leader. Writer/director Jennifer Pritchard happily juggles crude humor, jism and gore into an ingenious dose of video nonsense. And though it runs out of steam before the end, it's good for loads of foul laughs.

INGA [Jag—en oskuld] (1967).

Joe Sarno is without question one of my favorite sexploitation directors, especially his Swedish movies from the '60s and early '70s, which generated some of the oddest T&A flicks around. Unfortunately, his work was so strange and artsy that grindhouse patrons never embraced it, as they did more pedestrian fare. They seemed to prefer no-frills schupping to Sarno's more low-key vision, which featured females who were more than just cumholes, actors who gave a damn, and a technical professionalism that was unheard of in competing Deuce fare. At least one thing everyone appreciated was his knack for hiring gorgeous women, which brings us to Marie Liljedahl (a former ballet dancer

with a thoroughly jailbait look about her) who plays the title role of Inga, a 17-year-old virgin who keeps her nose perpetually stuffed in a book. But when Inga goes to visit her Aunt Greta, she unwittingly shakes up a long-cemented romantic triangle. First, there's thirtysomething Greta, who's unable to accept her age and still runs with a young, hip crowd. Then there's Karl, a studdly 21-year-old writer-wannabee who's nearly raped by every dish in town, yet remains Greta's boytoy as long as she empties her



From Sweden... the classic female concept.

bank account for him. And finally, we get Einar, a nice middle-aged guy whose wife has a permanent room at the local nuthouse, and who secretly cares about Greta. If this sounds like a soap opera to you, you're right. But after overdosing on nudie pics where you could write the entire screenplay on a condom wrapper, it's refreshing to get the occasional dose of misguided characters and tawdry ambitions (especially if there's loads of gratuitous

nudity). Meanwhile, the fresh-faced Liljedahl lends the film its maximum eroticism, because even though the naive Inga is initially rented out to wealthy Einar as a "constant companion" (thanks to her quiet, continental appearance), the moment this virginal youngster gets a gander at Karl, she drops all inhibitions to give him an extended peepshow thru her bedroom window. Though severely dated in the area of Women's Issues (Greta is ridiculed because she's in her 30's and still wears mini-skirts), Sarno gives the movie a polished, groovy veneer, keeps his cast perpetually in bed, and isn't afraid of a downbeat, cynical ending. As far as I'm concerned, he's the Ingmar Bergman of fuck films.

THE MONOLITH MONSTERS (1957). Throughout the '50s, Universal-International was the master of B-movie sci-fi, and this little gem is one of their oddest. Because instead of giant tarantulas or mole people, this time the puny human race is threatened by Intergalactic Rocks on the Rampage! Admittedly, it doesn't sound like the most menacing threat in the world, but this pic is sure to win you over with its nostalgically creaky characters, a few bizarre twists, and some genuinely cool special effects pulled off on a Pathmark budget. It begins when a strange meteor leaves chunks of shiny black rock across Death Valley, and a geologist brings a piece of the seemingly-innocent crap back to his small town lab. All hell breaks loose during the night, and the next morning the entire room is filled with these black crystals, growing up the stairs and ripping through the walls. The scientist, meanwhile, has been turned into a solid stone statue (a fate that befits his acting talent). It seems these crystals react violently with water and suck the silicon out of anything they touch, leaving petrified human beings in their wake (I particularly liked the family dog, which looks hard enough to pound railroad spikes). So while heroic Grant Williams (INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN) and Les Tremayne (THE WAR OF THE WORLDS) struggle to stop this menace and save a little girl's life (sniff sniff)—oops, it begins to pour!—with the now-enormous crystals threatening the safety of the town. Oddly enough, even though all these innocent people are about to be crushed, the only thing I gave a damn about were these immense towers of pitch black silica, rising out of the ground like organic Godzillas and toppling onto anything in its way (probably because they're a hell of a lot more interesting than any of the actors). Director John Sherwood (THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US) does a workmanlike job of keeping the plot brisk, the sentiment low and the hick characters less pinheaded than usual. And though you'll wish they'd cut down on the jabbering townsfolk, this compact yarn is recommended for those goofy growing rocks...If only someone could've marketed 'em like Sea Monkeys, they would have made a fortune.



April 29th:

THE FILMS OF JACK SMITH

Flaming Creatures & Scotch Tape

For comment see Jonas Mekas' column in Village Voice April 18

Remember: Monday Midnight at the Bleecker • Admission: \$1.25

FILM-MAKER'S SHOWCASE
at the Bleecker St. Cinema
EVERY MONDAY MIDNIGHT

FLAMING CREATURES (1962). This hallucinogenic 8mm epic is a cornerstone in the American underground movement, breaking new ground not only for its grainy improvisational style, but by the simple fact that *nothing* is straight in this flick—whether we're talking sexuality, drug use or simple camera placement. And if you think Andy Warhol's larks rocked '60s sensibilities, you should surely check out this 45-minute delight, because

when first making the rounds, screenings were routinely closed down and prints impounded. And it's still pretty lurid, even by today's standards. Filmed for a whopping \$300, director Jack Smith packs every frame with raw, lovable comic deviance, introducing us to his cast of "flaming creatures" and letting them frolic about without much plot. It begins with drag queens in full regalia, spreading on lipstick, then segues to a series of racy escapades. There's a tit shaken into the lenses; armpits sniffed; close-ups of entwined hairy limbs; and odd couplings of men, women, whatever. It quickly evolves into a massive, costumed, orgy-comedy (a crude erotic dream accompanied by various bits of sampled music and dialogue) and finally concludes with several impromptu dance numbers, including Spanish flamencos and home-made chorus girls, all looking like a dime-store Busby Berkeley musical after taking much-too-much acid. Filmed with coarse b&w stock, the picture is burnt out much of the time,

**LIVING SKYSCRAPERS OF STONE
THUNDERING ACROSS THE EARTH!**

...crushing ALL
that stand
in their
path!

THE MONOLITH MONSTERS

STARRING
GRANT WILLIAMS • LOLA ALBRIGHT — LES TREMAYNE

creating stark, gorgeous moments. Then again, other times this indecipherable mess looks like out-takes from Caligula's home movies, edited and photographed as crudely as any tripped-out sexploitation pic (though when the bleach blonde vampire appeared it sorta looked like a Courtney Love video). This campy romp is best appreciated nowadays for its place in underground history than for its spastically-lensed sexual indulgence, while Jack Smith and his cast should be congratulated for leaving all good taste at the door and breaking new ground in the boundaries of American avant-garde cinema.

VIGILANTE (1982). Even if you're not an exploitation addict, you've probably run across at least one of William Lustig's treats. *MANIAC* was a sleazebag success, thanks to Joe Spinell's sweaty lead, while *RELENTLESS* proved that Judd Nelson could indeed act. And *MANIAC COP* is one of the last great hits to play Times Square before its tragic face-lift. Besides, any director who'll give Fred Williamson a decent role during the '80s gets my vote of approval, and though moving a little slower than he did during his *BLACK CAESAR* salad days, the guy's still rock solid and chewin' on that same cheroot. Basically, this is just another urban vigilante pic, with vermin getting their comeuppance at the hands of do-gooding N.Y.C. citizens. But Lustig keeps it intense by reveling in pure, adrenalized trash, so when an innocent young woman is mugged in her apartment hallway, the flick doesn't waste any time with unnecessary character development. Bill knows what his audience has paid their bucks for, and immediately has Williamson and his goon squad beat the bejesus out of the greaseball perpetrator. Robert Forster co-stars as a loving hubbie, complete with a cute lil' rugrat (can you say, Dead Meat?). But when his missus slaps the (long in the tooth) leader of the Headhunter street gang and they enact their brutal revenge, Forster learns first-hand that the Judicial system sucks and cops are useless. So he teams up with Williamson, who's having a field day roughing up punks, hanging drug dealers outta windows and blasting insulated money men. Forster also picks up additional street savvy from Woody Strode (who, at nearly 70 years old, looks in better shape than Fred) when he's thrown in the clink for attacking a corrupt judge. Though pocked with unflinching violence (don't you love it when a whore gets shot in the chest and flies 'cross the room like a slutty Tinkerbell?), most of the fun comes from the cast. Williamson gets all the best lines as he fumes about the rotten criminal element; and although Forster has to play a major wiener for much of the movie, he learns to be a cold-blooded killer by the end. Let's not forget Joe Spinell as a shitbag lawyer and Carol Lynley as the D.A. This is a slick, tough street-pic, and though no classic, it hits all the right bases and leaves you wanting more.

THE LINE, THE CROSS AND THE CURVE (1993). My first memory of Kate Bush was back in the late '70s when she popped up on *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* for a ditzzy rendition of "The Man With the Child in his Eyes", while rolling about on top of Paul Schafer's piano. That was over 15 years ago, and her long, pretentious career has now led to her directorial debut with this dreary, hour-long excursion into her latest album. Overloaded with cheesy modern dance numbers, spastic camera angles, and half-baked overacting, this is less a real movie than a string of ludicrous videos, loosely tied together by a storyline mercilessly ripped from Michael Powell's *THE RED SHOES*. Kate (looking bloated and worse for wear) stars as a dancer/singer (now there's a big acting stretch for the gal, eh?) sitting in her



only advice to Kate is not to give up her music career, because her disputable acting and dance skills won't be paying the rent anytime this millennium. At its best, spectacularly silly. At its worst, simply inane. This film is only for diehard fanboys, still living in their parents' basements—although I'd wager even they'll only be mildly amused by this embarrassment.

BLOODLUST (1991). It's easy to love this new breed of wise-ass, low-budget Aussie/New Zealand goremeisters. Because while the U.S. is sitting on the can, pinching off high-priced, thoroughly-generic loafs, Down Under they're following in the footsteps of Peter Jackson by cranking out indie, in-your-stinkin'-face efforts that never fail to impress (especially after several pints). In this instance, don't let the bland title fool you, because this Melbourne-lensed horror hodgepodge features all the usual ingredients of four-star Aussie cinema, including unbridled bloodletting, big guns, bad teeth, bare tits, and an undying appreciation for a cold beer. Co-directors Richard Wolstencroft and Jon Hewitt are rotgut Einsteins when it comes to cool violence, and this modern-day vampire tale stars Jane Stewart Wallace, Kelly Chapman and Robert James O'Neill as a trio of bored bloodsuckers. Jane is a buxom blonde who waltzes up to Suits, shoves her push-up bra into their face and goes for the jugular; Kelly works as a Dominatrix with a foot fetish clientele; and long-tressed Robert is readying to ditch town with a cache of guns (you see, all three are sick of the neighborhood Christian zealots, who keeps staking their pals). But first off, they wanna party! After which they pull a casino robbery, armed with semi-auds' and bazookas, while turning the local Mob Bosses to ricotta cheese in the process. What makes these white trash vampires likable is how they get off on their cheap thrills lifestyle (a la *NEAR DARK*), including robberies, killings, or simply kicking the crap out of some dumb-ass who gets in their way. But times get tougher when the babbling religious fanatics, dim-witted cops and Guido gangsters get on their tails. How many more

studio, when a crazed ballerina (Miranda Richardson, on a vacation from any legitimate form of acting) runs out of a mirror and hands Kate her magical Red Shoes. In order to remove the slippers—and stop her perpetual dancing—Kate has to retrieve three pieces of paper, each containing one of the title drawings. On the plus side, you have to admire the fact that Bush is still doing her own thing, with complete creative control. Of course, it would've been nice if she'd come up with something better than this leaden ego trip, even if some of the cut-rate imagery is amusing in a nostalgic, ass-backwards way. For example, "The Red Shoes" sequence is blissfully bizarre, with Kate writhing about on a floor full of human bones, while theatrical pyrotechnics and pudgy Satans surround her. This royal mess certainly won't convince any newcomers of her waning charms, and though she might have been considered charmingly innocent during the '80s, her routine is getting pretty ripe in the '90s. My

gratuitous elements could you ask for? How about a humorous castration? A little necrophilia? Priest killings? Or perhaps the lovely ladies decked out in leather lingerie? Don't expect to take any of this crap seriously for one instant though (just as the filmmakers planned it, methinks), because it's difficult not to cringe at the lame acting or occasional cheeziness. With an eye toward cheap laughs and gross-out brutality, this crude, homespun journey into hardcore schlock never lets up, even in the face of utter stupidity. Bravo.

MADAM KITTY [a.k.a. Salon Kitty] (1975). Years before his bloated, all-star laff-riot *CALIGULA* for Penthouse Productions, director Tinto Brass set his sordid sights on Nazi Germany. And like his Roman embarrassment, this film takes a historical, X-rated look at sex, violence and abuse of power, hires some actual actors, and always keeps one foot in the gutter. The result is prime-grade art-swill, with all the bad acting and self-important decadence you could ask for (which kept it booked into only the classiest Times Square jism-joints). The time is 1939, the setting is Madam Kitty's German bordello (the watering hole for Aryan cognoscenti), and at the outbreak of World War II, the nasty Nazis take control of Kitty's successful business. First, they provide her with hand-picked (not to mention, unwilling and pre-abused) young girls who fit their Third Reich fantasies. Then, they set her up in a high-class villa loaded with surveillance equipment. Helmut Berger leaves his work with DeSica and Visconti behind him in the mud to play the power-hungry Kraut weasel in charge of Kitty's new abode; while Ingrid Thulin (one of Ingmar Bergman's long-term stock company) is the aging madam. And though both do their damndest, you get the feeling all they really want to do is go home and forget this career-killer. On a purely erotic level, it's rather lame, and though the prostitutes (a rather plain lot) are in a perpetual state of undress, only lithe Teresa Ann Savoy (the Pia Zadora of Euro-dreck, who also got wrangled into *CALIGULA*) makes any impression as a rich bitch-turned-whore. For softcore fetish freaks, there's the required dose of leather, whips, crawling on all fours like a dog, and (in my favorite bit of sledgehammer politics) a nude whore masturbating while Hitler film clips are projected onto her body. There are also poor-man's-CABARET musical numbers featuring cross-dressers, and bordello songs courtesy of Annie Ross (*SHORT CUTS*, *BASKETCASE 3*), while Tinto hides his lackluster degeneracy under sumptuous production design by Ken Adam (*THUNDERBALL*, *DR. STRANGE-LOVE*). The heavy-handed plot also slows down the sleaze, such as when a soldier falls for Savoy and defects, or Teresa's sudden realization that the Nazis are actually Bad Guys (did I forget to mention she's dumb?) and her revenge on detestable Helmut (whose role consists of one long hissy fit). All the while, this confused, big budget sex pic lurks uncomfortably between *SALO* and *LOVE CAMP 7*—lacking the braincells to cut it as high-raunch art, as well as the bare skin to be embraced by typical deviants.

DIVINE: LIVE AT THE HACIENDA (1983; Visionary, P.O. Box 30, Lytham St. Annes, FY8 1RL, England). Filmed on February 16, 1983, that dogshit-eating diva of John Waters' finest works, Divine, leaps onstage for a disco-era live show in Manchester, England. Filmed in his pre-*HAIRSPRAY*, less-mainstream days, Divine squeezes into a tiger-stripped, sequined cocktail mini-dress for the occasion—a dead ringer for a refrigerator with legs, and topped with a blonde fright wig that looks like he just stuck his dick into a wall socket. Sweating half a pint an hour, Divine belts out off-key tunes such as "The Name Game", "Jungle Jezebel" and "Born To Be Cheap". But while Divine pumps out this dance mix and jokes with his louder fans about piss, shit, dirty cunts, and other delightful bodily functions, you realize most of his confused punk audience isn't getting the cosmic joke, because they're too stunned at the sight of this huge American drag queen stomping across the stage. It's their loss, because this video is an invaluable document for fans to witness what Divine did to pay his rent in between film gigs (it's too bad Divine passed away before Sinatra's recent "Duets" album, because I'd kill to hear him and Frank doing a version of "Somethin' Stupid"). Giving his all for a roomful of stiff in a shithbox li'l club, and (even though

he musta weighed 300 pounds) moving with more energy than Mick Jagger has shown in a quarter century. He certainly cuts a frightening silhouette, shaking his maracas (as well as his immense, undulating gut) while somehow managing to be gorgeously gross in the process. This diabolically rancid stage show is perfect party fare, especially if you wanna clear the room of anyone lacking a sense of humor.

PASSION IN THE SUN [a.k.a. The Girl and the Geek] (1964). Only Mike Vraney's *Something Weird* video could unearth this type of obscure, white trash sexploitation (then again, who else in their right mind would want to?). This nudie roughie is a perfect example. A carnival geek escapes from a southern amusement park and gets the local lard-ass cops so concerned they nearly swallow their cheekful of chewin' tobacco. The narrator explains that we're supposed to sympathize with the geek's plight, especially when fate brings him face-to-face

with a chubby blonde stripper played by Josette Valague. But first we spend 45 minutes following zaftig Josette as she's kidnapped by a pair of thugs—wrasslin' in the back seat of a convertible, getting locked in the trunk, and chased cross-country in nothing but her undies. Of course, even when you're on the run from murderous felons, there's always time for a long skinny dip in a shallow pond or a nude nap in the dirt. This pathetic, totally hilarious sex romp ends at the geek's old amusement park, with Josette trapped on the Wild Mouse rollercoaster with her geek at the controls. Personally, I would've enjoyed less Girl and more Geek, since he cuts such a charismatic figure with his dirty undershirt, uncombed Beatles wig and tufts of black hair glued to his face—shuffling about like he's got four days worth of shit in his pants. Director Dale Berry (*HOT BLOODED WOMAN*) adds to the fun by screwing up in every

DEPRAVED • DECADENT • DAMNED NAZI GERMANY 1939



SEX IS NOT ONLY
AN ART BUT A
WEAPON WITH



Madam
Kitty

A Troma American Release

department. Though only 70 minutes long, it's padded with 15 minutes worth of San Souci strippers, who shake their sorry wares while awaiting Josette's arrival. The film also gives new meaning to the term "post-synch", because whenever there's dialogue, the actors conveniently lean off-camera or put something (like a phone) in front of their mouth. Better still, watch closely during Josette's frantic rollercoaster chase, when she's seen leisurely hanging onto a lit cigarette!... Made in Texas, where the film stock is cheap and the strippers look like they've already pumped out three or four kids.

LIONS LOVE (1969). Every time I come across a newly-unearthed, late-60s crock, I realize how much I adore that entire, loopy genre. Sure, it was a time of bold experimentation and all that film school shit—but it was also an era when just about any stoned, anti-establishment hack was handed a camera. For example, this two-ton dose of improvised indulgence begins on the right foot by hiring a cast of (barely-remembered) cultural icons, then gave them absolutely nothing to do, as if the simple fact that they're together was enough to make a great movie. Saddest still, someone convinced Nouvelle Vague director Agnes Varda to helm this steaming dump of an artflick—and although responsible for such upscale faves as *VAGABOND* and *CLEO FROM 5 TO 7*, Varda is totally in the dark this time around. Then again, look at the cast she had to work with: There's Warhol-diva Viva, *HAIR*-lyricists Ragni and Rado (who look like an upscale Cheech and Chong) and experimental director Shirley Clarke—all playing themselves. Set in Hollywood, this is supposed to be a scathing pseudo-documentary about stardom, glamour and fame in Tinseltown, but the actors seem as lost and unfocused as the "script" (I use the term loosely). Viva floats about on a raft, her bare butt stuck in the air. Ragni and Rado make it a menage a trois, with Viva in the middle of this Brain-Burnt Sandwich. Then Shirley enters as an underground filmmaker trying to get her movie green-lighted. One look and you'll understand why this artifact disappeared from theatres after a week and hasn't resurfaced since. Still, if you can ignore the fact that there's no plot, no characters (with the exception of the stars' inane personalities), and no reason behind all these pretentious, misguided intentions, it's a hoot to see these flaked-out hairballs at play. The cast watches Bobby Kennedy's assassination to show their depth; frolics with toddlers to represent their innocence; crashes in bed together to symbolize their freedom; and continually acknowledges the cameraman's presence, to remind the viewer how stupid this whole movie is. Varda occasionally hits the target (Clarke's botched "suicide" is particularly effective), but always returns to her inane play acting. And although Viva is fun to watch (it's worth a look just to see her in a nun's habit), the film lacks any heart and is a crashing bore of every unfathomable counterculture cliché. A film that promises to say much about the modern-day art scene, but is so in love with its insipid leads that it ends up saying nothing at all.

THE JOHNSONS (1997). Here's *my* type of family film! A German-lensed horrortale from director Rudolf Van Den Berg, which conjures up some genuinely grim thrills (despite a convoluted storyline), but after all is said and done, remains more admirable for its intentions than anything else. It starts on a perplexing note, when a successful Doctor delivers septuplets into the world, then after his hospital shift drives into the dark woods, grovels in the mud and is greeted by a creature in a flaming pond. Suddenly, 21 years later, we see the septuplets have grown into a bevy of full-blown psychopaths, who are still institutionalized after murdering 16 children when they were only seven years old. And these guys are fuckin' fantastic! Bald-headed, mute since birth, and ready for bigger, bloodier things once they get out of their maximum security prison/asylum. This film could've been a classic if the script had focused on them alone (imagine *HALLOWEEN* multiplied by seven), but instead we're introduced to a femme photojournalist whose teenaged daughter, Emily (Esmee De La Bretoniere) is plagued by nightmares of the creepy bald boys, complete with blood covered hands and ritualistic graffiti. In addition, a black university professor fills us in on the secret

of a lost South American Indian religion centered on an embryo God named Xangadix. And as 'predictable scripts would have it, Mom and Daughter end up camping near the brothers' prison—pretty convenient since the only way Xangadix can escape into the real world is if one of the psycho-bro's impregnates Emily and she gives birth to this Ultimate Evil. (And I bet you thought *THE OMEN* was half-baked rotgut!) The entire endeavor is livened-up once the Kojak-clan escapes in their prison 'jammies, and Mom and Emily take 'em on one by one (though the gore is never as goooey as you'd hope). This movie tries to be a novel twist on a bankrupt genre, unfortunately it never rips loose, while straining credibility at every turn. You gotta love those seven brothers though, because these guys are the real item—ready to tear anyone to shreds at a moment's notice. Too bad their hardcore dementia is continually shackled by this too-often-limp showcase.

PINK SLIP (Alpha Blue Archives, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610). This collection of antiquated film oddities comes complete with all the emulsion scratches and bad splices you'd expect from grade-

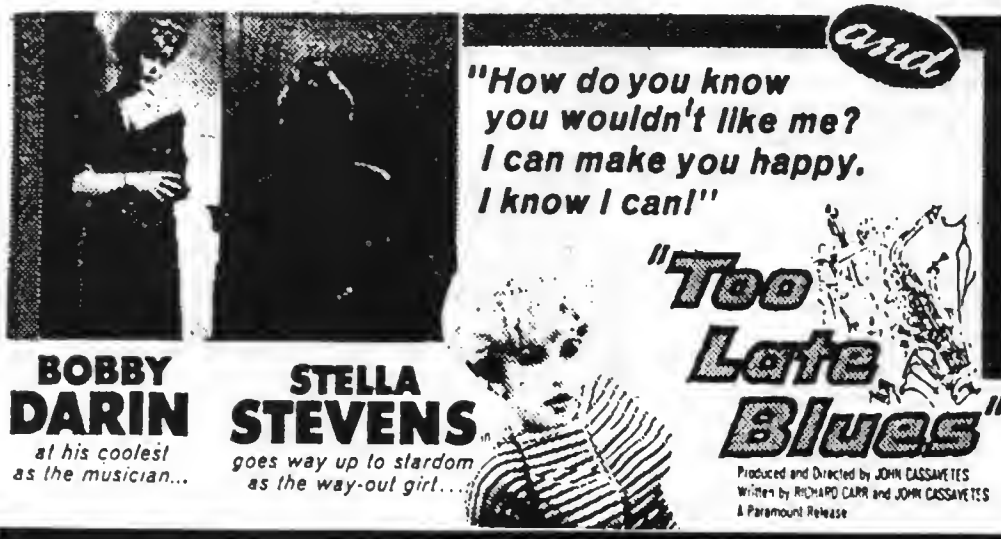
school Health Class shorts. But what makes this package different from all the others is the fact these '70s featurettes were the ones shown only to girls, as they took their first first tenuous steps into the secretive world of feminine problems. I only wish the distributor had kept the titles and credits on 'em, so we could pin-point the culprits...First off, we learn about that "special place where babies' grow" and how to use sanitary napkins (the old fashioned types, which look like a DeSade creation, complete with elastic belts and a pad as big as a roll of Bounty). After that, an anti-cigarette short introduces us to two teenage girls. The slutty one has been smoking for awhile and lures her naive cousin in via peer pressure, only to



rebel further by sneaking outta the house for a party and eventually learning their lesson from some drunk J.D.'s. Things get grimmer during a pic about sexual abuse aimed at high school girls. The end result: A black girl ends up dead after a fake baby-sitting gig, and another kid makes friends with an old lecher who's into jailbait T&A photos. But without question, the most disturbing is a family drama about periods, featuring a retarded looking li'l girl who's taught all about sanitary napkins, complete with a look at a used pad (ugh) and the kid wearing one for "pretend". Disturbingly repetitious (even by the usual standards), this is set at an I.Q. of 40. And the final assault on our senses is an episode of the old Christian morality show, *INSIGHT* (I still have nightmarish childhood memories of those Sunday morning dramas, encountered by accident while searching the dial for cartoons). Geraldine Brooks and Lloyd Bochner play the prim parents of a runaway (Deborah Winters) who's pulled in by the cops with tales of drugs, pregnancy and hippie slang. Pure pabulum, and an appropriate capper for this mixed bag of teen turmoil.

TOO LATE BLUES (1961). On the surface, this seems like just another *Rebellious Misfit* pic, stuck on the bottom half of double bills during its first release. But check out that director's credit and you'll discover it's the second feature from John Cassavetes, lensed after his groundbreaking *SHADOWS* and cool TV series gig as jazz musician/detective JOHNNY STACCATO. Well, before hitting the big time playing supporting slob in *THE DIRTY DOZEN* and *ROSEMARY'S BABY*, and directing arthouse mindfucks like *A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE*, Paramount snagged Cassavetes for this hip excursion into the lower rungs of the blues scene, starring Bobby Darin and a pre-*PRETTY PROFESSOR* Stella Stevens as a pair of young hipsters. And despite hitting every B-movie cliché along the way, Cassavetes captures the lingo, the music, the bullshit, and the endless phonies to perfection. Darin plays Ghost, a two-bit jazz pianist who head up a band of self-proclaimed screwballs, who make a little bread playing empty city parks "for the trees and birds", while Stella is blonde dish Jess Polanski, who has one eye on Darin's affections and the other on music stardom (but lacks the talent to sustain either). The two link up at a posh party, bounce to a local bar, slug back a parade of cocktails, and you quickly realize that Stella's just a cheap bimbo and Darin is a pasty, ego-fed, little jerk (not exactly what the public expected in their stars). In fact, the entire cast is populated by disillusioned, parasitic creeps, with Cassavetes sneaking gobs of low-life reality into the 3rd rate script. Both Stevens and Darin are surprisingly good as these unlikable leads, with Stella eventually screwing around and turning into just another painted-up, suicidal, barroom floozy; and egomaniacal Darin fucking up his one shot at fame, losing all his pals, and ending up a lounge lizard gigolo for an older dame. Highlights include a saloon drinking contest turned drunken brawl (with Darin showing what a spineless wimp he can be) as well as a believable supporting cast including Seymour Cassel playing upright bass in Darin's combo, and a pre-BEN CASEY Vince Edwards as a barroom brawler. Their downbeat melodrama starts at the bottom and just goes deeper, and though it's an authentic look at the bottom of the Music Biz barrel, I'm sure the studios had second thoughts about Cassavetes' mainstream talents after one look at this cynical romp.

LOVE COMMUNE [a.k.a. Sign Of Aquarius] (1970). It's *THE CHELSEA GIRLS* meets 42nd Street Swill in this hippie potboiler that reeks of real life, thanks to actual New York City locations and a cast of no-names who look like they were plucked right out of Tompkins Square, and ends up being a less-than-sterling (in other words, pretty accurate) portrait of that entire Peace 'n' Love Generation. And though it starts slow, I really got into this flick's crude charms and authentic, dime-store trippiness. Paul Elliot stars as Sonny, a misogynistic stoned-out flower child who informs his blonde girlfriend that "I just wanna do my thing, with no hang-ups". From then on, Sonny and his weirdo pals deal with fascist cops, anti-drug harpies, colorful lighting, and more drugs than in all of Woodstock. Yes, everything that made the late-60's such a festering cesspool of stupidity is here, including *LAUGH-IN*-like body painting, fish-eyed lenses, kaleidoscope optics, spastic nude dancing, and those always-welcome Freak Out scenes—my fave is a woman having a bum trip and hallucinating that she's actually giving birth to The World. I especially grooved on Mousie (Jim Coursar), a huge black guy with a Clarence Williams the 3rd afro and pre-WILLIE DYNAMITE threads. But the best bits are when these deadbeats scam free bus rides and beg for loose change from annoyed, real-life passers-by (who probably never realized they were secretly on-camera). Unfortunately, most of the non-action takes place in their crash pad/commune, where the group babbles incessantly, ingests so many drugs that all their clothes fall off, and engage in a hideously-choreographed ode to psychedelia that looks like an out-take from a



Boise roadshow production of *HAIR*. There's not much sex during the 71 minutes, just general immorality and a hint of stale melodrama when a runaway rich girl enters the commune. And suddenly, in the last ten minutes, an honest to goodness plot intrudes on the free-wheelin' antics, when the Mob provides a teary finale to all this adorable horseshit. You get the feeling director Robert J. Emery was trying to say something relevant about these anti-social hairballs (especially with his self-important finale), but his grittier moments are lost amidst all this loopy, poverty-row fun.

KEKO MASK (1993). Fans of the burgeoning genre of Under-Age Japanese Female Superhero T&A will be the first on line for this silliness, since it features a naked ninja girl named Keko Mask who fights oppression wearing nothing but a cape and fuchsia mask. Of course, this convenient lack of clothing keeps her opponents happily ogling her wares while she proceeds to kick the crap out of 'em. And like others in the genre, this is essentially low-budget exploitation aimed at the funny bone as well as the crotch. The story takes place

at a remote school for teens, and despite its facade as a high-class institute of learning, perpetual screw-ups wind up in the school torture chamber, hung from the ceiling half naked and threatened with heated irons. It's Keko Mask's job to protect the students from their sadistic professors, led by a Principal who sits on a floating throne while attired in a ridiculous jester's hat, copper skin and Fu Manchu-esque fingernails, and torments the jailbait high schoolers by shearing off their clothes with a chainsaw. As you can guess, this buffoon (Kaju Kujuku) isn't exactly a chilling figure, while director Tomo Akiyama stresses pathetic comedy over its more vile elements (shucks). And every time the movie begins to amuse us with light bondage or schoolgirl skin (one pretty student is tied up and stripped in the middle of Art Class), Keko Mask breaks up the fun with her anti-sexist jabbering and fight sequences so lame they make the World Wrestling Federation look like Jackie Chan. Though the concept of a naked superheroine beating the bejesus outta badguys initially sounds alluring, the wimpy filmmakers give it such a lightweight, snickering veneer that it's hard to find anything remotely erotic. Still, there's enough weirdness to keep you in amused disbelief. I particularly enjoyed how Keko hypnotizes her enemies with her vagina (since you can't show genitalia in Japan, all we see is a 100 Watt glow around her crotch) before snapping their necks between her bare thighs; plus the trio of snivelling comic book geeks who become informers for the Headmaster. Clocking in at 76 minutes (and not a moment too soon), this has all the earmarks of a series pilot, right down to dangling plot threads (as well as the defeated villain openly wondering if he'll be hired on for the sequel). Though amusingly prurient, it's also soft-at-the-center and instantly forgettable.

NICK ZEDD: STEAL THIS VIDEO (1980-1988; Film Threat Video). Since Film Threat generously sent me a free copy of this collection, I feel a responsibility to mention it, even though Nick hates my guts (how I miss our old evenings together, sharing a big bowl of Jiffy Pop and watching SEINFELD). On the other hand, the always-petulant Zedd hates most people's guts, so I'll keep this brief...There's nothing wrong with indulgent, pissed-off films. But in Zedd's case, not only does he recycle every self-important idea to death, but despite years of trying, the guy still can't figure out the basics of making a halfway watchable movie (nevertheless, his publicity makes him sound like the D.W.Griffith of the Lower East Side). The shorts include the conspiracy-fueled THE BOGUS MAN (1980); THRUST IN ME (1984), with Zedd in a dual role as a woman (who slits her wrists in the tub) and a guy (who snags a necrophiliac blowjob as a going away gift); THE WILD WORLD OF LYDIA LUNCH (1983), which cobbles together badly lensed footage of Lydia wandering about; POLICE STATE (1987), during which Zedd has his scrawny ass hauled to jail and is beaten by several (accurately depicted) pigs; and WHOREGASM (1988), which seems spliced together from whatever footage was laying on his apartment floor. This 71 minute package is difficult to endure in one sitting, since

the initial curiosity and/or shock value wears off in about 20 minutes, after which you wanna put on something more intellectually stimulating—like THE MARILU HENNER SHOW...Hopefully Nick will make enough dough off this cushy deal that he'll be able to move outta the East Village once and for all. Unfortunately, from the bored reaction this collection received at my neighborhood video store (Richard Kern out-rents him 10 to 1), he'll have a long way to go before he can afford that down payment on a Jersey Shore condo.

WITHOUT WARNING [a.k.a. It Came...Without Warning] (1980). Greydon Clark, the hack director who gave the public such endearing swill as THE FORBIDDEN DANCE (South American princess goes to The Big City to save her rain forests and becomes a Lambada star), JOYSTICKS (bloated Joe Don Baker tries to close down a beloved video arcade) and THE UNINVITED (genetically altered kitty cat kills a boatload of over-the-hill character actors), is most fondly remembered for this drive-in no-brainer, featuring an Unemployment Line's worth of familiar faces and future Oscar winners. This pre-PREDATOR, Alien-Hunting-Humans horror tale may be stupid to the core, but it's also a wondrous throwback to those dumb-ass, American-International monster movies (but with lots more blood). Cameron Mitchell is the first celeb to croak, playing a macho-shit hunter who

drags his P.C. son into the wilderness to learn the manly art of shooting small, defenseless animals with a gun. But instead, Cam is attacked by toothy, parasitic fried eggs that spin through the air like hairy Frisbees and tunnel their tentacles under your skin. The culprit is a (barely-glimpsed) intergalactic hunter with a big bald head, who roams the backwoods, tosses these deadly flying sand dollars and collects earth men like trophies (or rather, dinner). Other humans on the run include Jack Palance as a craggy old hunter who warns a vanload of teens to stay away from the lake (following tradition, the idiots don't); Martin Landau as the craggy old Sarge, who babbles to himself like a major loon and is obsessed with killing the monster; Larry "F Troop" Storch providing 'comic' relief as a craggy old scoutmaster (evolving from sitcom schmuck to schlock movie schmuck in



only a decade); plus a seemingly-teenaged David Caruso playing one of the earliest victims (looking like he's ready to audition for the lead in ARCHIE—THE MOVIE!). The rest of the pic is a predictable sci-fi twist on FRIDAY THE 13TH, with a surviving teen couple dealing with both the redneck locals and this 8-foot-tall Space Sportsman who keeps his victims (who drool green ooze) hanging up in a shed like sides of beef. Most of the pic is aimed at an audience who'll be too stoned or drunk to realize the movie's even playing, but on the good side, Palance and Landau are terrific, growling incessantly at each other as their dignity crashes and burns. They go beyond simple overacting—this is some kind of primal, on-camera career suicide—and it's difficult to imagine either of 'em allowed near the Academy Awards, much less going home with Oscars one day. For those two clods alone, it's worth a look.

BLAZING STEWARDESSES

(1975). Any schlock veteran from the '60s is familiar with director Al Adamson, who (in tandem with Independent-International Pictures) cranked out such bottom-of-the-septic-tank laff riots as *HORROR OF THE BLOOD MONSTERS*, *SATAN'S SADISTS* and *DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN*. The list goes on and on, each one hokier than the last, with Adamson's work keeping drive-ins alive with their lurid ad campaigns, indecipherable stories, and continual title changes. But even his greatest admirers have to admit that this pic blows! Sadder still, you get the feeling this is exactly the film he set out to make—a pathetic slice of comic cinemanure with a western motif. The story involves a trio of busty young stewardesses (Connie Hoffman, T.A. King, and Regina Carrol, whose acting abilities rest solely in their push-up bras) who are invited for a two-week vacation at the Lucky Dollar Dude Ranch. Since blonde Connie's boyfriend is schtupping another broad, she grabs vapid Regina and black King, and off they head for a relaxing getaway. But all is not well at this cowpoke casino, since black-hooded riders are out to sabotage the place. The plot is as mildewed as a '30s Mascot western, and while the viewer is supposed to give a damn who wins the Big Showdown (the white-wardrobed hero or the black-garbed villains? Take a wild guess, Einstein), the only suspense was in awaiting the end credits. To make this a true homage to a film genre nobody gives a rat's ass about, Adamson hired Bob Livingston and Don "Red" Barry, a pair of crotchety B-movie oater stars, to play the co-runners of the ranch. Yvonne DeCarlo is also on board as Honey, the head madam of The Beehive, a local whorehouse. And even though DeCarlo is on the hefty side (O.K., she fuckin' fat), she gives the limp role her all, even belting out a showtune during an inexplicable musical number and indulging in blow-up doll jokes while teaching the stewardesses *Bordello Basics 101*. Saddest of all are The Ritz Brothers, Harry and Jimmy, who dance and mug ad infinitum, but look so thin and frail you're afraid they're gonna have a brain aneurism if they attempt anything physical (like heavy breathing). If this ain't enough, Al pads out this slop with footage of the stewardesses going to the zoo (excitement!), doing some shopping (thrills!) and enjoying a small town hick parade (horrors!). At the very least a savvy director would've used his extra film stock on gratuitous shower scenes featuring the cleavage-heavy cast, but not Adamson! In fact, he gets *everything* wrong this time, with his mild PG-rated antics aimed strictly at a no-brow family audience. A more accurate title would've been "Old Farts Out West". Pass the NoDoz.

GIGANTES PLANETARIOS (1965). There's nothing more satisfying than 87 minutes of insipid, dime-store Mexplotation (especially after pounding down pints 'til four in the morning). But this one is particularly ridiculous since it's aimed at a kid's mentality (and an especially slow child, at that), complete with hokey 2-D sets, wobbly flying saucers, and a 60 Watt raygun that turns victims into ash. Director Alfredo Crevenna is no novice to Mexican silliness, with



'epics' like *SANTO VERSUS THE MARTIANS* and *THE NEW INVISIBLE MAN* under his belt, but this is his all-time low. Guillermo Murray and Adriana Roel star, respectively, as the mui macho Daniel and pretty Sylvia, the associate of a porky scientist. But when aliens begin invading the earth (not again?!) and interrupt Daniel and Sylvia's blossoming romance, the duo blasts into space to save the earth. Unfortunately, instead of a wrestling subplot (which we've all come expect in any self-respecting Mexican schlock), the filmmakers take a totally different route by tossing in a *boxing* subplot instead, with a fighter and his manager stowing away on a rocketship to the Planet of Eternal Light (cut to: A cheaply glued-together model kit with a smoke bomb up its exhaust), along with Daniel and Sylvia. Of course, it takes 50 lousy minutes before these cretins even

get to the planet, and this space-age swill makes *LOST IN SPACE* look like 2001. Once there, the humans (note that I never use the word "actors") discover an alien galaxy chock full of fresh air, in addition to an Ancient Greek-styled culture ruled by an Evil Dude who plans to wipe out the Earth with a fleet of cheaply-drawn UFO's and a Death Gun (which, since it can only kill one person at a time, substantially slows down their conquest plans). The quartet is initially taken hostage by the aliens (equipped with mini-togas, cardboard swords and two-foot-high wire antennas), but turn the tables and begin zapping the Bad Guys, eventually turning over the planet to peaceable (whipped) folks who wouldn't dare destroy the earth. Of course, in the best Abbott and Costello tradition, amidst all this chaos, the boxer and his agent fall for a couple intergalactic chicks. Totally stupid, also but strangely compelling—like a South of the Border episode of *STAR TREK*, as directed by Larry Buchanan.

TEENAGE CATGIRLS IN HEAT (1993). From the ridiculous title alone (not to mention the stench), you know we're in Troma territory again, kids. And those bastards, Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz, are still making us feel like total asses for getting suckered into watching their pathetic acquisitions. When they actually make their own movie, you can be assured of some colorful, corny laughs (I can't wait for their latest epic, *TROMEO AND JULIET*, arriving at video store near you approximately a week after it comes back from the lab), but their crude, retitled pick-ups are usually the absolute pits! (Of course, what else would expect from *MANIAC NURSES FIND ECSTASY* or *FEMME FONTAINE: KILLER BABE FOR THE C.I.A.*?) Hard to believe, but *TEENAGE CATGIRLS* is one of their dullest abominations, and though it boasts a '93 copyright, this Texas turd has the unmistakable idiocy of '70s drive-in dreck (remember crap like *CAN I DO IT...TILL I NEED GLASSES?* I wish I didn't). This rancid excuse for a home video begins when a statue of an Egyptian Cat Goddess transforms the local felines into naked young women (whose nudity is conveniently masked most of the time). And while all the hick males simply wanna ball these meowing dames, a pair of Nerd Heros (conveniently, one is a professional cat wrangler) are onto the Catgirls' plan to destroy human males. Most of the flick is

filmed in some rural shack in the middle of nowhere, populated by this six-pack of fully-clothed Catgirls, who spend their time crawling around the floor, tangled in yawn, and sniffing out nearby men. Meanwhile Cleo dates one of our spastic heros, despite her occasional hairball. The entire cast reeks, the film is barely R-rated, the comedy has all the subtlety of a GOMER PYLE rerun, and the effects are so no-tech you wonder why they even bothered (the cat chaser's equipment consists of a power drill with a mixing bowl attached to its bit). Even with a six pack of Red Stripe under my belt, I couldn't stomach this drivel, directed by the justifiably-forgotten Scott Perry. I've wasted enough space already on this dull-as-dogfood, cinematic hemorrhoid. Next!

COLOR ME LURID: The Welrd World of George Kuchar (1966-1978). This U.K. compilation gives us a long overdue glimpse into the amazing celluloid escapades of underground legend George Kuchar. Not only is he one of the most prolific indies of all time (and reportedly, a damn nice guy), but continually proves that just because you're low on the cinematic food chain, doesn't mean your movies have to look like shit. The package begins with Kuchar's notorious **HOLD ME WHILE I'M NAKED** (1966), a colorful, self-reflexive assault starring George as a director who's having troubles with his starlet. There are snippets of pop music, multiple takes, garish set design, and unforgettable images (my fave is Kuchar drowning in his own film stock, but most viewers will undoubtedly vote for the shower scene featuring Donna Kerness and her spray-on wardrobe). **THE MONGRELOID** (1978) is a love letter to George's best friend: His dog. Complete with Kuchar babbling to his canine like it was a child and reminiscing about "making cockie", this may be adorable for dog lovers, but difficult to stomach for anyone sane. **FOREVER AND ALWAYS** (1978) returns to disorienting fiction, with this bittersweet ode to misplaced love. When a husband goes away on a business trip (in reality, swapping spit with a young floozy), his overworked wife is left to change diapers. **A REASON TO LIVE** (1976) is a b&w camp fest, starring Curt McDowell (director of **THUNDERCRACK**) as a two-timing swine and Marion Eaton as his suspicious wife. This broad, absurdist comedy plays like Douglas Sirk on peyote—a hyper-melodramatic morality play with doses of surreal stupidity. Sudden demises, ripe dialogue, a glorious bathtub electrocution, plus an early look into Kuchar's obsession with weather. Also included is the wonderfully voyeuristic **I, AN ACTRESS** (1977) filmed at the San Francisco Art Institute, with Kuchar coaching a dreadful starlet-wannabee... Unlike most underground filmmakers, Kuchar's embellished home movies are constantly mutating into new forms. His lush melodramas are the most successful—acheiving a benign kitsch on a Woolworth's budget, right down to his gorgeous, hand-drawn credits and an obvious adoration of classic Hollywood muck. And though never outrageous enough to be wholeheartedly embraced on the cult circuit, his most personal works have just enough of an evil edge to let the viewer in on his joke.

GUYANA, CULT OF THE DAMNED (1980). If you're looking for a modicum of truth behind the infamous Kool-Aid Mass Suicide Messiah, Reverend Jim Jones, check out Powers Boothe's sleazy, greasy performance in **THE GUYANA TRAGEDY**. But for sheer rotgut, there's no equal to Rene Cardona Jr.'s make-a-quick-buck schlockfest. Of course, Cardona Jr. (not to be confused with his more-talented dad, who helmed such seminal joys as **WRESTLING WOMEN VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY** and the Mexican **SANTA CLAUS**)

was never exactly known for his subtlety, as evidenced by his **NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES**, **NIGHT OF A THOUSAND CATS** and **SURVIVE!** (the cheap knock-off of the Andes Cannibal Airplane Disaster). But this is, without question, his worst! Pocked with slumming Tinseltown stars, a total lack of good taste and lotsa cruel laughs at the expense of a buncha dead, religious assholes! Stuart Whitman dons the white suit and Elvis sunglasses to portray Rev. "James Johnson" (they changed the name so psychotic shitheel Jim Jones couldn't rise from the grave and sue 'em?), who's begun a "Johnsontown" colony in the middle of rustic Guyana. And although he's promoting "love and freedom" on the outside, Johnson is putting his empty-headed followers through a hell on earth that includes whippings, rape, drug addiction, genital electrocution, and torturing little kids by pouring snakes onto 'em. Most of the production is filmed on the one plantation set, and it must have been a record-breaking shoot, because they certainly didn't wait around for any second takes. To add to the fun, the entire anglo cast looks sick with Montezuma's Revenge. Whitman is a laugh riot of spittle 'n' brimstone, Yvonne "Lily Munster" deCarlo looks like she spent the '70s binging on Hostess Twinkies, Joseph Cotten plays a sleazy Johnsontown lawyer, while Gene Barry is a Congressional bigwig. But hands down, it's Bradford Dillman who gets the plumb slimeball role as the Town Doc, who mixes up the poisoned Kool-Aid and even gets to feed it to babies! Cardona

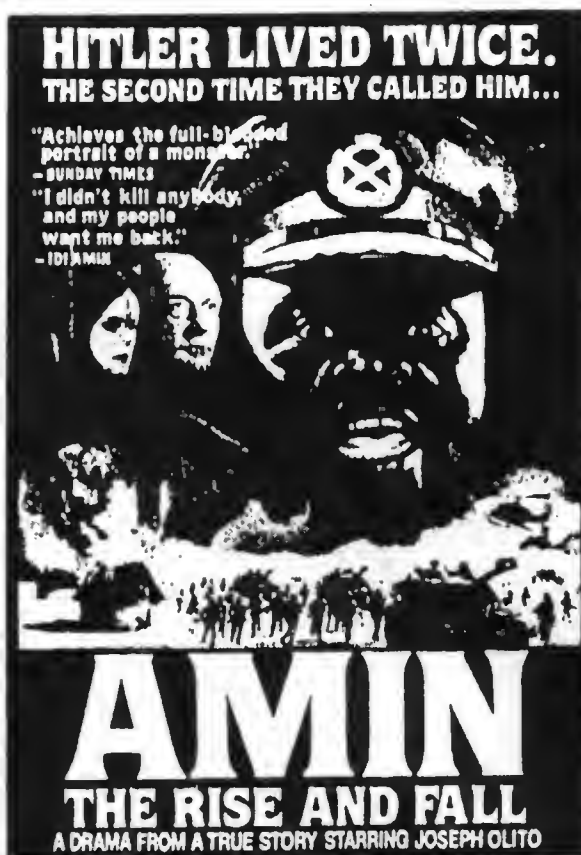
could barely direct his own bowel movement, much less a movie. But at least he dives into "The Last Day" with joyous, unapologetic abandon, as the Johnsontown lemmings drop like flies after following their crackpot leader's orders to kill themselves (it's too bad more religious fanatics don't do the same). What a sleazy combination! A real-life megalomaniac with a death wish, a full roster of Hollywood has-beens, an inept Mexican crew—the only thing this slapdash production needed were some Sondheim musical numbers. Now *that* would have been a movie!

AMIN: THE RISE AND FALL (1981). In our continuing search for sleazebag docu-dramas, who could forget everyone's favorite Ugandan windbag, that fat clown General Idi Amin? Unlike Barbet Schroeder's black comic documentary on the guy in '74, this pic is pure trash, dwelling on only the most violent episodes. Is it any wonder I love it? And though director Sharad Patel is an inept hack, what makes this film a must-see is the mind-boggling lead perfor-



mance from Joseph Olita, who can barely pronounce his lines, has an ego slightly larger than his ass, and (from the look at the grotesque gut hanging over his belt) hasn't taken a dump since the '60s. This guy is a total wild man! A laugh-a-minute lunatic who carves strips of flesh off his victims and nibbles on them, or simply keeps the heads of his ex-enemies in his kitchen freezer, next to the Ben & Jerry's. The movie kicks off with Uganda's military coup in '71, which brought General Amin to power, and though the British government twits don't have any qualms about the guy's odd behavior, we all know he's a four-star, sadistic fruitcake. So while "Big Daddy" frolics about like a walrus in his pool, surrounded by admiring dames, his thugs (three guys in ugly Hawaiian shirts) are blithely murdering anyone in his way, whether it's opposing politicians or foreign reporters. This slapdash portrait of the "Black Hitler" is a total gas, and unlike the self-important Entebbe TV-movies from that era, this one is packed with big, violent, inept laffs as the General gets squirrelier every moment. He has his various wives killed and dismembered; blows the back of the head off an Archbishop; and the sight of bare-chested Olita squeezed between two naked broads is the aesthetic equivalent of Pavarotti doing a Playgirl centerfold. Best of all, when this self-described "world's greatest lover" gets the hots for one classy dame, he has his police drag off her fiancé, so he can have a little quality time to rape her. But when she stabs herself rather than get harpooned by this blob, Amin's only concern is washing the blood stains outta his expensive bed sheets. Though lensed without a lick of finesse, this is pure joy for sickfuck psycho-addicts who'll be cheering on Amin's fever-pitched, cartoon antics 'til the bloody end.

NUDIST COLONY OF THE DEAD (1991). A prostate exam is more entertaining than this Super 8, home-made abomination! But would you expect anything less from director Mark Pirro, who cursed us with such lowbrow losers as *A POLISH VAMPIRE IN BURBANK*, *CURSE OF THE QUEERWOLF* and *BUFORD'S BEACH BUNNIES* (with Jim Hanks playing a likable idiot, years before brother Tom won an Oscar for the same, exact role), and is such a total hack you're surprised he remembered to take the lens cap off his camera. Then again, you can always spot a stinker a mile away when it's got Forrest J. Ackerman in a cameo role—this time playing Judge Rhinehole, who closes down the Sunny Buttocks Nudist Camp for indecency. The members get so depressed they pull a Jonestown-suicide number, and vow revenge on the prudish townsfolk. Years later, when a busload of teens arrive for a religious retreat (the typical cross-section of cretinous twits, horny teens, and a wisecracking Bible Thumper), the dead nudists come back to life and begin depleting the cast. This fails on every imaginable schlock level, and if you're not in a coma by the midpoint, you'll wish you were. In fact, the only thing that keeps the movie amusing (in the most unintentionally asinine way) is the fact it's also a goddamn musical, packed with crude 'n' lewd songs. A fat-assed Park Ranger breaks into a Rap tune about dead kids, the soon-to-be-dead teens sing innocuous ditties about how nice it is to be alive; and there's even a rock 'n' roll Satan song. At first glance, you



have to admire Pirro's ability to get his witless vision onto the screen, but its smug and annoying attitude quickly curdles any and all good will. It's obvious the filmmakers hoped to lure unsuspecting sleaze-a-holics in with the campy title, but there's no energy, no pacing, almost no gore, and not enough tits to keep us even mildly distracted. Starring a bunch of locals who, in the future, will undoubtedly regret this entire experience.

FASCINATION (1979). Director Jean Rollin's career has included bizarre sex 'n' bloodsucking romps such as *LE FRISON DES VAMPIRES*, all-out gore-fests like *LES RAISINS DE LA MORT*, and even a little hardcore '70s porno. This particular flick is one of his most beloved, in part to Rollin's sumptuous atmosphere, but mostly due to its quota of bare-naked ladies, led by blonde sleaze-queen Brigitte Lahaie. Set at the turn of the century, a thief on the run (Jean-Marie Lemaire) encounters a mysterious castle in the middle of the country. The chateau houses a pair of seemingly-innocent, nightgowned cuties (Franca Mai and Brigitte), who lure him in with hopes of

a place to crash and lotsa sex, but instead turn out to be lesbian psychos who screw about with his head in anticipation of their Mistress' arrival. So begins another fantasy about an unsuspecting guy abused by gorgeous, sex-crazed women, accompanied by picturesque shots of the lovelies fondling each other (is it any wonder Rollin has so many nerdy fans?). Rollin gets points for his pseudo-artsy veneer (similar to Walerian Borowczyk's school of Sombre Schtupping), but it's all so wrongheadedly solemn that you can't help but laugh. The first half is relatively low-key, punctuated by any excuse for Lahaie to strip off her bodice and shake her lungwarts (still, it's better work than her early porn flicks), and the second half picks up speed when Brigitte (naked, but for a black cape) grabs a handy scythe and slashes up some unwanted visitors. Unfortunately, she doesn't continue this tirade, or else this film might've acquired some vague feminist subtext. Instead, a bevy of females guests arrive at the house while Lemaire plays a blindfolded round of "Guess Whose Breasts I'm Fondling?" (second only to Twister when it comes to French party games). And this guy is such a dolt he doesn't have a clue when warned "At midnight, you'll see what seven women can do to a lone man." Of course, these hungry lasses wanna feed on his corpse, but in the end, there's less actual horror than pretentious, softcore hijinx. And although Lahaie does her best to heat up this nicely-lensed sex romp, Rollin usually wimps out at the most inopportune moments. Not bad, just too lightweight for my tastes.

G.G. ALLIN: BLEEDIN', STINKIN' AND DRINKIN' (1997). Ever since G.G. croaked, everybody who's ever videotaped the poor, fucked up guy has tried to make a quick buck off his long-promised demise. The best of the lot, Todd Phillips' *HATED*, was an amazing documentary that captured the guy—warts, shit, vomit and all—but more importantly, had a razor-sharp grasp of the absurd. Even brother Merle is trying to lash together a pic featuring G.G.'s final concert at The Gas Station...At least this ultra-crude, hour-long video portrait has an appropriate title, while capturing G.G. off-stage and at

his loosest. The pic begins with Allin sitting on the floor of a filthy apartment, jamming on his guitar like any other Lower East Sider (though G.G.'s guitar has a syringe jammed in its neck for supposed shock value). The table is littered with a week's worth of empty beer bottles, and unlike his shows, the guy gets to finish his tunes without interruption from catcalls, security guards or the sudden urge to hurl his feces at the audience. After a few musical selections, the second half contains interviews with G.G., who lets loose with quotable, anti-social platitudes like "The whole world is my enemy". And if you aren't bored yet, just wait until his encounter with a trio of stretch-marked groupies, sticking their asses in his face. This downbeat, attitude-fueled hour includes fun tunes, generic interviews and grainy, ugly video FX that'll make your eyes ache after awhile. Another crude stepping stone in this rock 'n' roll martyr's cult—most likely embraced by people who never actually had the chance to witness the guy in action.

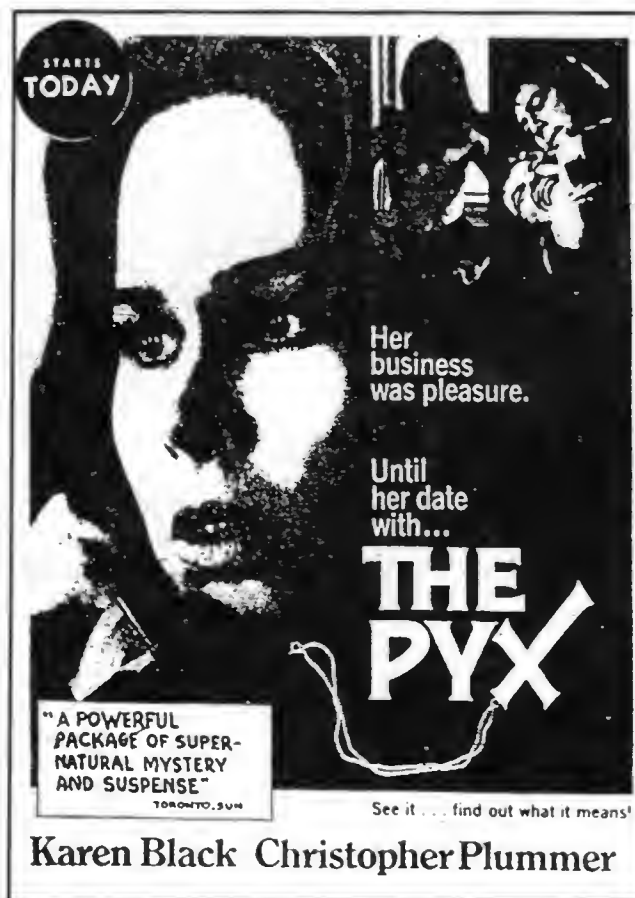
SOME LIKE IT VIOLENT (1968; Alpha Blue Archives, P.O. Box 16072, Oakland, CA 94610). What makes this nudie-roughie more memorable than the zillion other b&w Z-graders to fill grindhouses throughout the '60s? Not a hell of a lot, though it certainly revels in enough lurid laughs to keep deviants amused in between flogging their maggot. But in addition to all the large breasted ladies in easily disposable lingerie, leave it to sleaze producer extraordinaire Barry Mahon and director Kemal Horulu to also deliver the absolute worst acting, cheapest hotel room sets, a canned soundtrack, and plenty of astounding Barbie-style hairdos. The plot involves a tough-as-nails pimp named Johnny Scaro, who's pissed that the fuzz has been busting all his call girls. With the help of his lawyer, Dapper Dan, Scaro gets the idea of muscling in on one of them new-fangled computer dating services, overloading the club with his own floozies, then using their ultra-high-tech computer (in actuality, a small Data Card Sorter) to match up horny guys with his scrawny whores, in exchange for a large, totally-legit fee. Nice scam, eh? Plus, Scaro can even recruit new additions to his stable through this service. Unfortunately, these choice morsels of feminine pulchritude are actually pretty weather-beaten if you look closely (Mahon obviously scoured every 4th rate strip club in town to fill out the supporting cast), while Scaro and his mugs are about as life-threatening as Leo Gorcey and The Bowery Boys. But by far the most idiotic characters are the cops, who use Dolores, the grieving daughter of a slain officer, to infiltrate Scaro's operation as "new talent"—nonchalantly putting her ass on the line in order to frame this kingpin. Of course, the girl is subsequently manhandled, stripped and raped, but thankfully, it was all in the name of Law and Order. All the men onboard are either horny, stupid or vicious; the women are only there for low-grade ogling; and despite a sadistic edge, it's the unintentional howlers you remember best—like the randid romance between the head detective and Dolores, their inane innuendo delivered with all the acting panache of a Driver's Ed film. It all adds up to supremely leaden sexploitation.

THE PYX (1973). On the surface, this odd Montreal-lensed thriller has a lot going against it. First off, a lousy title (for you heathens out there, a Pyx is the container used to carry the Host) which, even when you know what the hell it means, only makes it sound like some boring Catholic tripe. Next, there's director Harvey Hart's low-key approach—which will surely lull Cheap Thrill Lovers into a state of catatonia. And finally, you have to prepare yourself for the fact that schlock goddess Karen Black not only stars, but also sings three of her personal compositions (perhaps the scariest notion in the entire

film). Her hypnotic, acoustic dirges include "I Was Touched By Your Passing Through", "It All Turned Out the Way I Planned It" and "Song of Solomon, Chapter Three, Verses 1 to 4"; and although she's spent the '90s trapped in offal like ZAPPED AGAIN and AUNTIE LEE'S MEAT PIES, this pic is from the days when Karen actually gave a damn. Oddly enough, it begins with Karen's death—the victim of a high-rise leap in a see-thru negligee—with the cops (led by Christopher Plummer) recognizing her as a local hooker. While Plummer investigates the apparent suicide, we're privy to fragmented flashbacks of Black's life as a smack-shooting whore, complete with pathetic clientele and a heap-
ing of cheap Catholic symbolism. Plummer eventually uncovers a satanic conspiracy behind Karen's defenestration, with more bodies piling up along the way and even a dead cat nailed to a door with a kitchen knife. All because poor Karen was the object of desire for some filthy rich scum, and got suckered into being the main course at a Black Mass. Director Hart (best known for his cool supernatural detective pilot, DARK INTRUDER, with

Leslie Nielsen) gets the tone right, but is totally ragged in the technical department, while the most fun comes from watching Karen playing this sad, pathetic broad who's got a date with a morgue slab. Vaguely disturbing and (happily) devoid of sentiment, this supernatural-tinged yarn is best reserved for hardcore Karen Black fans only.

UNDERGROUND TERROR [a.k.a. Underground: An Urban Nightmare] (1988). This pitch black N.Y.C. grime-fest dredges up the dregs of humanity and deposits them in the lead roles, as a gang of bedraggled creeps who live under the subways in a deserted 23rd Street station, terrorizing hilariously-defenseless commuters. Better still, these homeless slobes are led by Boris, a weaselly little psychopath recently sprung from the funny farm. But if you think these bums are unlikable, wait until you meet Willis, the pic's so-called 'hero', a hard-boiled, loose cannon detective (we haven't seen *that* stereotype very often, have we?) who enjoys gunning down Avenue C drug suspects, and takes on the Case of the Subway Platform Slaughters. So while these homicidal hobos prowl subway cars, Willis turns vigilante and hunts down the scum with the aid of a determined female reporter. Of course, Detective Machismo and Lois Lane Jr. are so annoying that you sympathize more with the sadistic tunnel thugs—even though they tie people to subway tracks, play with razored-off ears, and bash gangbanged women to death with a



baseball bat. The entire film is filled with sudden, unnerving jolts of violence, and although much of the bloodshed is kept off-camera, the casual brutality still leaves you nicely shaken. Of course, the finale has this pinheaded meatball with a badge taking on the subway sleazebags. Nothing too innovative here, but Director James McCalmont keeps it nasty and unsettling, getting good mileage out of his claustrophobic (albeit not very realistic) locales. Additional kudos to Lennie Loftin as gang leader Boris, who seems rather defenseless on the surface, but turns into a savage asshole when the opportunity arises. Though never hitting the highest echelons of urban dementia (a la *STREET TRASH*), it's still a downbeat, brutal and ugly portrait of New York City, making it another Big Apple Tourist Bureau fave.

THE CANDY TANGERINE MAN (1975). There were lotsa cool blaxploitation pics lensed back in the '70s, and even more mediocre ones. Well, this foul chunk of grindhouse feces is one of the worst—somehow uniting every gratuitous, Oreo element that eventually turned the entire gritty genre into a joke. It sucks!...Still, I have a soft spot for this excruciating disaster. First, it was directed by Matt Cimber (best ridiculed for Pia Zadora fiascos like *BUTTERFLY* and *FAKE OUT*), who doesn't know shit about the inner city or Black culture. Yet despite his lily-white roots, Cimber cranked out 42nd Street swill like *LADY COCOA* (Lola Falana's revenge pic) and *THE BLACK SIX* (NFL neanderthals take on Whitey). Then there's the laughably uncharismatic John Daniels (who also starred in that *Hair-Dresser Vs. The Mob* epic, *BLACK SHAMPOO*) in the lead as The Baron, who, by day is a respected businessman with a wife and kids—but at night, becomes the city's funkier pimp, with a gold Rolls Royce and a stable of "sweet little money-making bitches". This guy's a total motherfucker, killing anyone in his way, and with everyone out for his ass. The cops tempt him with an undercover cop in drag; the Italian mobsters abuse his "skagbags" and hire torpedoes; and 4th-rate competitors try to lure away his dried-up ol' mini-skirted whores. But beneath that outrageous velour suit, The Baron has a heart of electroplated gold—even giving runaway girls a ticket back home so they won't go bad. And after his

Player duties are done, Baron changes into a Brooks Brothers suit and hangs with his suburban missus, who thinks hubbie is just an over-worked, white-collar schmuck (of course, his white friends don't realize he's the city's most infamous pimp because "they all look alike"). This Black antecedent for *DOCTOR DETROIT* is crammed with demeaning ethnic stereotypes and rampant stupidity, but it's also a lame, laugh riot. Full of blithe sadism (one guy has his hand



crammed down a garbage disposal, then uses his stump as a straight razor holder), horrible actors (the supporting cast makes Antonio Fargas look like Paul Scofield), and a refreshing lack of restraint (especially Baron's slo-mo barroom massacre). Plus, how can you resist a movie that actually credits the "hookers of the Sunset Strip in Hollywood" as supporting cast members? Wretched fun.

THE SWILL and THE SWELL

Whaddaya mean, you haven't gotten enough movie reviews yet? Well, here's a few quickies...Basically, this has been a sucky year for movies. And I should know, because I'm the type of moron who'll even (try to) watch total shit. Speaking of excrement, there's the insipid **LITTLE WOMEN**. Believe it or not, the '33 Kate Hepburn version had more backbone, and the only thing that could've improved this big-budget bore would be a long, lesbo shower scene between Winona Ryder and Samantha Mathis...A recent surprise is Tom DiCillo's **LIVING IN OBLIVION**, starring Steve Buscemi as a high-strung director in the middle of a no-budget shoot. DiCillo's first film was the vapid **JOHNNY SUEDE**, starring a pompadoured Brad Pitt, and this follow-up earns big laffs during a savage riff on Brad's egomaniacal, womanizing behavior (with James LeGros having a ball as "Chad Palomino"). More than just a string of in-jokes, this is an exceptionally clever look at the anxieties and chaos of shoestring filmmaking...For a larger dose of LeGros, check out his lead in **FLOUNDERING**. Like you, I'm sick to death of Gen X cinema and its poseur/whiner attitude, so I was surprised by this ragged gem. Director Peter McCarthy (who produced *REPO MAN*) strives for a gonzo edge, and though a little stupid at times, this surreal portrait of a depressed deadbeat shows the depths that you can reach during

a bad week. Makes good use of post-riot L.A., and even Ethan Hawke's cameo doesn't suck!...With **THE PROFESSIONAL**, Frogland fave Luc Besson proves that most Hollywood action flicks are cookie-cutter shit. Jean Reno shines as a cold hitman who takes orphan Natalie Portman under his wing, teaches her how to "clean" and goes after corrupt cop Gary Oldman (still playing wackos—but on him, it works). The cast is great (with the exception of Danny Aiello—lemme guess, he's playing an Italian?), while Besson blows us away with explosive set pieces...Speaking of Oldman, he's the sole reason to check out **IMMORTAL BELOVED**, the messy Beethoven bio-pic that crosses *AMADEUS* with *CITIZEN KANE*, tosses in babes for modern appeal, but needs a more imaginative director than Bernard Rose (his first pic; *PAPERHOUSE*, is still his best). Oldman provides chuckles as the misanthropic, love-struck musician (what is this, *LUDWIG AND NANCY?*) and keeps you awake through the banal bits...It's only mid-year, but my favorite film so far? **THE PROPHECY** (filmed under the more appropriate title, **GOD'S ARMY**), which mixes creepy horror with religious theology, for a kickass journey into the war between God and his angels over mankind's fate. These aren't your innocuous, *IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* angels though—they're savage warriors, and what better casting than Christopher Walken as

archangel Gabriel? Walken is both funny and brutal in his dealings with the earth's "talking monkeys"; with able support from Eric Stoltz, Amanda Plummer, and Viggo Mortensen as Lucifer. A gorgeous, bold debut from director Gregory Widen...Another favorite film experience of this year? Closely following Oliver Stone's apocalyptic **NATURAL BORN KILLERS** (I can watch that one 'til doomsday and still laugh my ass off from beginning to end) is **THE BRADY BUNCH MOVIE**. Yes, you read it correctly. I grew up on the original show, still have one of their albums (try to imagine "American Pie" as sung by The Brady Kids), and couldn't believe I was laughing out loud at a movie starring the hateful Shelley Long. Dumb fun, best enjoyed with a roomful of stoned fans...**TANK GIRL** flew in and out of theatres, and while a sci-fi(asco) like **STARGATE** can rake in millions, this wild, grungy vision of a water-barren future is ignored. The normally-grating Lori Petty is perfect in the raucous lead, who links up with fetching Naomi Watts to take on Malcolm McDowell's Gestapo-like Dept. of Water and Power. A rare case where the film surpasses its source material, featuring Ice-T under kangaroo make-up, a Busby Berkeley homage and refreshingly rude 'n' resourceful heroines...**HEAVENLY CREATURES** proved that Peter Jackson is no one-genre wonder. This true tale of schoolgirl adolescence, alienation and murder is so good that (for once) a movie deserved all its critical accolades. And despite its more upscale territory, under the surface it's just as weird as Jackson's early, blatantly-deviant fare....For more Kiwi chills, go directly to **JACK BE NIMBLE**, a psychotic nightmare in the form of an art film from newcomer Garth Maxwell. Alexis Arquette (usually annoying, but damned good here) and Sarah Smuts-Kennedy star as separated siblings, each raised by dysfunctional families. This creepy tale of murder, revenge and the supernatural works its own unique rhythms, and things get really grim when the siblings reunite to search for their parents, with a sinister quartet of feral daughters close on the pair's trail...John Carpenter's slump is over with **IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS** (though I'm still not sure I can forgive the guy for directing a Chevy Chase movie), which clicks because of Sam Neill's solid lead (his weirdest role since **POSSESSION**) and a storyline that isn't afraid to get truly twisted. Neill plays an insurance investigator who dives into the disappearance of a best-selling horror author, whose books are turning readers into psychotic zombies (not unlike Jackie Collin's work), enabling Carpenter to cut loose with lotsa imaginative dementia...Wes Craven also sneaks plenty of self-reflexive jabs into **WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE**, while hauling out that ol' cashcow, Freddie Krueger. Unfortunately, amidst the clever twists, we get the same old asinine FX...Barbet Schroeder remains one of my favorite directors, thanks to early fare like **BARFLY** and **MAITRESSE**. But his more recent, Tinseltown career is erratic, as seen with **KISS OF DEATH**, the David Caruso-starrer that features a cool cast (Samuel L. Jackson, Ving Rhames and the scene-stealing Nicholas Cage), but is hampered by predictable scripting. Gritty, but never as compelling as it wants to be...I couldn't wait to check out Nick Gomez's sophomore effort, **NEW JERSEY DRIVE**, since his Brooklyn slice-of-lowlife, **LAWS OF GRAVITY**, is a fave. Unfortunately, although his latest has an assured style, this tale of black, teenaged car-jackers is so ham-handed (producer Spike Lee's influence?) that it makes **POETIC JUSTICE** look subtle. On the other hand, it makes Jersey cops look like scum, so it ain't all bad...With a light-hearted title like **THE SECRET ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB**, you'd never expect this wicked, stop motion fairy tale from director Dave Borthwick, which feels like a cross between Franz Kafka and Will Vinton, and features a tiny ugly child who looks like a bald Corey Haim with a goiter. Kidnapped from his loving home, Tom is subjected to grotesque lab experiments, ends up in the sewers, and is taken in by the equally small Jack the Giant killer. I especially loved the minute details, including animated fish flopping about on kitchen plates, a woman wearing a live beetle as a brooch, and you can't beat

that Santa Claus crucifix. Needless to add, barely released in the U.S...Though director Hal Hartley is far from a household name, I think the guy's terrific, with an unmistakable style and sensibility. The quirky comic thriller **AMATEUR** is his best yet, featuring Martin Donovan as an amnesiac who doesn't remember he's a sadistic shit, Elina Lowensohn as a porn actress on the run, and Isabelle Hubbert as a nymphomaniac ex-nun who writes bad porn. Weird, deadpan and downbeat...Michael Almereyda's **NADJA** also stars Lowensohn and Donovan, but this time in an artsy, N.Y.C. vampire pic. Elina plays Count Dracula's daughter, Donovan is Van Helsing's nephew, while Peter Fonda steals every scene as the legendary vampire-staker—playing the guy like a crazed, burnt-out ex-hippie. Though too anemic for hardcore horror fans, this low-budget romp has a sly sense of humor and lush b&w photography, while turning the entire vampire mythos into a dysfunctional family drama...**TALES FROM THE HOOD** is a cool horror romp from director Rusty Cundieff, that revitalizes the hoary anthology genre by adding an admirable urban subtext. Vengeful zombies, domestic monsters, a weird-assed **CLOCKWORK ORANGE** homage, and Clarence Williams III playing it over-the-top as our whacked funeral home director. Not many real scares, but back in the '80s, this would've been perfect 42nd Street fare with a couple 40's...**CARNOSAUR 2** would be instantly forgettable dino-exploitation, except to observe the career decline of John Savage, who once graced hits like **THE DEER HUNTER**, and is now stuck in gory, Corman trash (since he appeared in a Fulcrum film, at least he has good taste in swill)...For deliriously bloodthirsty, white trash thrills, check out **LOVE AND A .45**, a pitch black road movie about a pair of newlywed Texan felons (Gil Bellows & Renee Zellweger), on the run after offing a couple redneck cops and followed by their psycho speed-freak ex-pal. Hilarious cameos from Peter Fonda, Jack Nance and Jeffrey Combs, copious drug intake, glorious violence, and gratuitous style from director C.M. Talkington. One of last year's funniest and cruelest indies...If you thought **ROMPER STOMPER** was a breath of fetid air, wait until you see Aussie director Geoffrey Wright's even-bleaker follow-up, **METAL SKIN**—a celluloid dirge of rebellion, violence, misguided love, witchcraft, and hot rods. It's a big depressing world out there for Joe, who can't hold a job, has a loony dad, lives in a hovel, and falls for a local cutie. And though a slapdash mess, Wright's imagery keeps you riveted throughout Joe's spiral into teenage hell. No surprise it still doesn't have a U.S. release....Another M.I.A. is **NECRONOMICON**, a trio of FX-laden tales with a wraparound story of H.P. Lovecraft (a heavily latexed Jeffrey Combs) uncovering the legendary title book and taking a few notes for future use. Lovecraft diehards will be disappointed with the cheezy results from producer Brian Yuzna, but for some spectacularly gruesome imagery, this is it. Lensed in '93, but still lacking a Stateside release...Instead, crap like **EMBRACE OF THE VAMPIRE** gets pumped into video stores, whose only raison d'etre is to see former "Who's The Boss?" juvenile Alyssa Milano playing a nekkid (but virginally) college girl who's stalked by the local vampire. Total hooley, except for the most desperate bishop-floggers...Other faves? **QUEEN MARGOT** gives us historical pageantry, political intrigue, wall-to-wall grue, and the ethereal Isabelle Adjani. What else do you need?...And even if you're bored to death by documentaries, Terry Zwigoff's **CRUMB** is a fascinating portrait of Robert Crumb's underground cartoon legacy and (more importantly) his fucked-up family. Depressing and brilliant...**THE LAST SEDUCTION** is a tight li'l suspense with a rockin' performance by Linda Fiorentino—but fact that it popped up on so many Best 10 lists only shows you how wimpy most female roles are nowadays...And the lovably low-budget **CLERKS** comes off like a Fox sitcom as created by Jim Jarmusch...Well, I've run out of room before I could get to big budgeters like **MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN** and **INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE**. That's alright, because despite their pretty sets, they both stank like the Port Authority mens' room.

Books AND Zines

THE SLEAZE MERCHANTS: ADVENTURES ON EXPLOITATION FILMMAKING. Edited by John McCarty (St. Martin's Press; \$16.95). McCarty, best known for his invaluable OFFICIAL SPLATTER MOVIE GUIDES, is back in the bookstores with this collection of interviews and career bios, highlighting fifteen of the more renowned (and in some cases, infamous) names in schlock filmmaking, both past and present. Some of the more classic folks have been profiled to death—such as H.G. Lewis, Ed Wood and John Waters—but these sections are nicely informative for novices to the exploitation scene. But what I personally loved were seeing entire chapters devoted to William Lustig (I laughed by ass off during his recollections of working with a wasted Jan Michael Vincent) and Andy Milligan (whose film legacy is more entertaining to read about than actually sit through). This solid collection of low-rent auteurs is also chock full of b&w monster pics and gratuitous cheesecake, but one weakness is the lack of any critical opinion of its subjects. This becomes particularly apparent when it comes to the rotgut triptych of Fred Olen Ray, Jim Wynorski and David DeCoteau. These guys crank out some of the worst straight-to-video shit around, but the interviewer gushes over their work like he was getting a handjob under the table from 'em. And why waste space on Brett "Who?" Piper, while completely skipping over *real* geniuses like Doris Wishman or Roberta Findlay? Ahh, but I'm nitpicking, because when it comes right down to it, I'm ecstatic this type of book is getting into the mass market—keeping the filmmakers' names alive while giving readers selected filmographies to aid us in searching out their movies (or in some cases, knowing which ones to stay far, far away from).

SEX MURDER ART: THE FILMS OF JORG BUTTGEREIT by David Kerekes (Headpress, P.O. Box 160, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 4ET, England) and **KILLING FOR CULTURE: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF DEATH FILM FROM MONDO TO SNUFF** by David Kerekes and David Slater (Creation Books, 83, Clerkenwell Road, London EC1 5RJ, England). David Kerekes has been a busy guy lately, with his name gracing this pair of impressive volumes. The first, *SEX MURDER ART*, is a loving tribute to the whacked-out vision of German director Jorg Buttgereit. Personally, I've only liked two of Jorg's movies, the original *NEKROMANTIK* and his latest *SCHRAMM* (reviewed in this issue), but even though I'm not a hardcore fan of his work, Buttgereit turns out to be such a damned interesting fellow that I was compelled to follow along. In addition, Kerekes' compelling prose nearly convinces you Buttgereit is some sort of raw, rancid genius, as he digs into this guy's past with all the exuberance of a corpse-fucker at a fresh grave—pulling out everything you could possibly want to know about his whacked-out art and life, including an extensive interview and a visit to the set of *SCHRAMM*. Laced with nasty photos, grim comix and

rare ads, this essential volume won't be converting any non-believers (you know...BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY scum), but will have fans salivating over each and every page. Get it!...On the other hand, while the Jorg book maintains a tunnelvision view, *KILLING FOR CULTURE* is a weighty volume documenting the extensive death-flick genre and our culture's growing fascination with that somber subject matter—and in its 350+ pages Kerekes & Slater cover everything from classics like *PEEPING TOM* and shit-sleaze like *LAST HOUSE ON DEAD END STREET*, to savage cinema-verite satire such as *MAN BITES DOG*. An entire chapter chronicles the ludicrous controversy about Michael & Roberta Findlay's *SNUFF*, to media-related fatalities (a la Bud Dwyer's on-camera demise). And completists will want to run to get their full-fledged history of mondo movies, from the classics to the current, including plenty of vintage ad slicks. Packed with odd recollections and disturbing facts, this incredible volume manages to incorporate *CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST*, Richard Kern, *FACES OF DEATH*, and so many other disgusting items that you'll lose count after awhile. But this isn't just some fly-by-night freakshow, because Kerekes & Slater have done their homework and pulled it all together into a beautiful book that should grace every cinema deviant's coffee table.

THE GATES OF BOOMBOX HEAVEN and **OVER THE INTERSTATE LINES OF THE MIND** by Bob Zark (The Panic Button Priest, P.O. Box 1905, Stuyvesant Station, New York, N.Y. 10009; \$7.95 for each book, or \$5.95 for each cassette version). Watch out, New Yorkers! Hardcore cynic Bob Zark is back in the East Village, touring all the lowlife venues and publishing two new collections of his poetic rants. First off is *BOOMBOX*, which mixes his pissed-off tirades with an assortment of revelatory outpourings that

cut to the heart of urban madness, hatred and misery (with such universally understood titles as "I Can't Stand Myself"). While the title "America Losing its Grip" perfectly sums up his acid-etched vision of this whole sick, screwed-up world. Zark shoots for even bigger game with *INTERSTATE*—and though he loses some of his more personal observations in the process, his targets are well worth dumping on. With subjects as diverse as Stop 'N' Shops, local crazies, the hateful new breed of hipsters, and (my personal favorite), "The Average Postal Stamp", which begs the Postal System to issue stamps that show life as it truly is—including everything from highway roadkill to Hiroshima victims. In addition, his "The State Shuts Up Its Working Stiffs" is an angry but heartfelt ode to Mike Diana and

his screwing over by Florida shitheels, not to mention a Bible analogy made even more relevant in the light of today's festering intolerance. Laced with cool illos from local artists like Steve Cerio and Scott Cunningham, Zark's work is like a close friend suddenly slapping some sense into you. And it's about time somebody did.



'ZINES & assorted SMALL-PRESS

BLACKEST HEART MAGAZINE (Shawn Smith, 1291 Hays St. #360, San Leandro, CA 94577; \$7). A crude, shit-your-pants-hilarious mag that pisses on every no-talent poseur to get in their way, and has the balls to stand by their drunken opinions. So guzzle a case of lukewarm Piels and enjoy the best 'zine since The Gore Gazette. High praise indeed.

CASHIERS DU CINEMART (Mike Barnett, P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192-7417; \$1 per issue). Amusingly personal rants on film, video and beyond. #2 features a slew of cool articles on Tarantino overdose, Kevin Bacon, Asian cinema, plus reviews, letters and assorted spot-on opinions.

CHILDREN OF A FAR GREATER GOD (Miles Wood, Flat 3, 89 Saltram Crescent, London W9 3JS, England). The one and only MARRIED...WITH CHILDREN fanzine is up to issue #5, and is still tracking down obscure facts about the show and its cast. Features episode guides, repro-ed articles, film reviews, and odd tidbits galore.

CINERAIDER (Richard Aklyama, P.O. Box 240226, Honolulu, HI 96824-0226; \$12 for 3 issues / single issues \$5 ppd.). Are you sick of people sledgehammering you about the joys of Hong Kong cinema yet? Well, this insightful review-zine is an essential guide to that genre, keeping you abreast of all the latest HK releases, in addition to reviews and articles.

CRITICAL CONDITION (Fred Adelman, 215 B Overmount Ave., West Paterson, NJ 07424-3251; \$9 for 4 issues). Gotta love this 'zine, since Fred covers the same type of film & video crap I love so dearly—including the bottom of the barrel dreck even I won't touch. Loaded with obscure reviews, an acid sense of humor and an appreciation for the entire twisted genre. Grab a six-pack and enjoy.

DREADFUL PLEASURES (Mike Accomando, 650 Prospect Ave., Fairview, N.J. 07022; \$3). After a far-too-long hiatus, Mike is back with a double issue of fond, 42nd Street memories. A sleaze-drenched tour down '70s memory lane, complete with reviews, filmographies, and amazing ad slicks from the era.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA (Craig Ledbetter, P.O. Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325; Single issues for \$6, or \$20 for 4 issues). No self-respecting fan of European schlock/horror/westerns/etc. would be caught dead without this mag. Craig unearthed some of the most obscure shit imaginable and ties it all together into a slick, professional package that has no equal.

EXPLOITATION RETROSPECT (P.O. Box 1155, Haddonfield, N.J. 08033-0708; single issue: \$2 / 6 issue sub: \$10). Dan Taylor has been banging away on this guide to fringe media for over 40 issues. Their recent change to newsprint still features solid articles, music & film reviews, but I long for their old, obsessive theme issues.

FATAL VISIONS (P.O. Box 133, Northcote, VIC 3070, Australia; Single issues: \$6 U.S. Cash only). Michael Helms continues to crank out one of the best mags around—an ultra-cool journal covering a wide-range of horror, action and arthouse sleaze that I couldn't do without. Laced with interviews, reviews, plus The Chinatown Beat clues you into all the latest Hong Kong fare. A longtime fave, and deservedly so.

FILM THREAT VIDEO GUIDE (P.O. Box 3170, Los Angeles, CA 91505; \$4.95). Everybody knows that the glossy FILM THREAT MAGAZINE eats corporate butthole. Nevertheless, their quarterly VIDEO GUIDE is essential reading for any underground film fan. Crammed with indie reviews, articles, and a wise-assed sense of humor—this mag manages to keep FILM THREAT's original, scathing vision alive. God bless 'em.

FUNERAL PARTY (The Horror Society, 511 6th Avenue No.325, New York, NY 10011; \$15 plus \$3 postage). This immense (114 pages!), gorgeous mag is loaded with sick delights. You've got interviews with Jim VanBebber, Chas. Balun and William Mastrosimone; Buddy Giovinazzo's fiction; a wild article on H.R. Giger, plus much, much more. Though heavy on the Goth side, this is a must-have for fans of cutting-edge dementia.

GUTTER TRASH (Mike Tsaros, 1740 Mulford Ave. Apt. 10-G, Bronx, N.Y. 10461; send for info). This 'zine from the depths of New York City is always good for

info on lowlife culture and nostalgic, underground laughs from an editor who knows his shit. Loaded with interviews, reviews, sleazy ads, and a scummy world view that keeps this crude mag on the money.

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE (Michael Flores, P.O. Box 14683, Chicago, IL 60614-0683; \$3 for single issue). This digest-sized film 'zine is limp stuff, praising crap like STAR TREK: VOYAGER, STARGATE and other geek-a-thons. Biggest disappointment is the generic Jodorowsky article, written by some boob who hasn't even seen most of that mad genius' works.

THE JOE BOB BRIGGS REPORT (P.O. Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221; send name and address for free issue). Still going strong—even if the price is a tad steep (\$65 for 26 issues)—this hilarious newsletter covers all the major and minor video crapola. In fact, reading Briggs' shit-kicker reviews is better than actually watching this straight-to-video slop.

LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS (c/o Richard Klemenson, P.O. Box 3107, Des Moines, Iowa 50316; \$6.95). This hefty, 128-page (!) journal on everything you always wanted to know about Hammer films is packed with dense type, ultra-obscure info and gorgeous cheesecake pix of the babes who populated those amazing flicks. A hardcore labour of love.

MIDNIGHT MARQUEE (Gary Svehla, 9721 Brittain Lane, Baltimore, MD 21234; \$5.95). This thick, long-running mag is up to issue #48, and still finds loads of long-winded articles on films from the '30s and '40s. Loving produced, but reads like a drier version of FILMFAX, minus all the cool shit.

MISTER DENSITY (P.O. Box 172, Westview Station, Binghamton, NY 13905-0172; \$2 cash apiece). My prayers have been answered. It's the "unofficial Crispin H. Glover fanzine"—an ever evolving biography/tribute/analysis of one of the most cryptic screen personalities since Dennis Hopper's early acid daze, complete with reviews, rumors, personal reflections, encounters with The Weird One, even cut-out paper dolls of the guy! If you're a Crispin fan, send for all six issues of this insightfully-written tribute to one of the great oddballs of the 20th Century. You won't be disappointed!

PUBLICATIONS

MOTORBOOTY (Motorbooty Worldwide Communications, P.O. Box 02007, Detroit, MI 48202; \$14 for 4 issues). Without question, the coolest, funniest magazine on the modern music scene. Imagine Mad Magazine crossed with Spin, and you get this mix of info, comix and a dead-perfect skewering of the Alternative Poseur scene.

PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO (Michael J. Weldon, 3309 Rt.97, Narrowsburg, N.Y. 12764-6126; \$4). What more can be said about this Bible for schlock addicts? Buy it. Read it. Love it. Live it. Absolutely essential. And while you're at it, get in line this very moment for Michael's new, huge, long-awaited PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO GUIDE, due out later this year.

SAMHAIN (Exeter Road Topsham, Exeter Devon EX3 0LX, England; \$20 for 5 issues). For my money, when it comes to slick horror mags, this is at the top of the list. Loads of reviews, insightful interviews, obscure treats, plus a welcome appreciation for older unsung genre gems.

SCHLOCK (John Chilson, 3841 Fourth Ave. #192, San Diego, CA 92103; \$1). This "Journal of Low-Brow Culture and Video" might be thin, but it hits all the right bases, including loads of video and 'zine reviews, letters, and assorted dementia. I especially enjoy its fondness for vinyl kitsch (who else covers Jackie Gleason albums?). Send 'em a lousy buck, dammit!

SHEMP! (c/o Larry Yoshida, 1919 Evergreen Park Dr. SW, Apt. 79, Olympia, WA 98502-5939; Free with S.A.S.E.). Larry's "lowlife culture magazine" is still going strong, packed with attitude, reviews and the usual slapdash layout. Best of all, its raw enthusiasm reminds me of all the old 'zines I grew up on. Crude and cool, with a distinct personality behind it all.

SHOCKING IMAGES (Mark Jason Murray, P.O. Box 7853, Citrus Heights, CA 95621; \$3.95). A mag after my own heart. Packed with movie reviews (lotsa Euro-trash and '70s Times Square fare), interviews (#4 features a talk with Rudy Ray Moore), plus enough Asian shit and cannibal flicks to keep you happily amused. Crude fun.

SLEAZORAMA, PORNORAMA and COLD SWEAT (Media Publications, c/o Trevor

Barley, Unit C, 2 Leswin Place, London, N16 7NJ, England). All three of these U.K. 'zines revel in unbridled cinematic trash. The digest-sized C.SWEAT is filled with reviews and fan-fest recollections; while the aptly-titled SLEAZORAMA gets top honors for its unapologetic T&A that includes early nudie pix of famous actresses, scream queen updates and loads of gratuitous sexploitation slop. PORNORAMA is a lecher's delight, focusing on the wild world of the X-rated movie industry, with bimbo filmographies, extensive interviews and insightful articles (such as "Squirting! The Great Debate"). Hilariously rude and informative.

TERMINAL BRAIN ROT (7312 Reynard Lane, Charlotte, NC 28215; \$1 plus 2 stamps). A digest-sized journal, crammed with video'n' record reviews (they're better in the music dept. than in film though), cool illos and plenty of personal rants (I particularly loved their recent rant on Zima).

WEIRD CITY (Dave Szurek, 1206 Wheeler #2, Hoquiam, Washington 98550-1901; \$2.50 Cash). Less a fanzine than a dense, rambly letter from a friend who couldn't care a rat's ass about style. And Dave's crude but heartfelt 'zine is crammed with his opinions on movies, life and fandom in general (plus lotsa reader's contributions).

WET PAINT (Jeff Smith, 3907 Block Dr. #2201, Irving, TX 75038; Single issue: #3. Five-issue sub: \$12). With over 40 issues under his belt, Jeff continues his digest-sized 'zine aimed at the sci-fi/horror junkie. Don't let its fondness for fannish dreck (Star Trek ads, Animated Batman episode guides) divert you from its more intelligent bits of business.

WORLD OF FANDOM (P.O. Box 9421, Tampa, FL 33604; \$4.25). Does anybody actually read this no-I.Q.'ed crock? I hope not. Wall-to-wall ass-kissing and generic writing that makes me wanna puke (preferably, on the editor).

XEROMORPHIC (Terrance Jennings Wharton, P.O. Box 481, Lancaster, OH 43130). This is a 'zine after my own twisted heart. Loaded with personal observations about the long-gone drive-in era and overloaded with nostalgic triple-bill ad slicks, it's a trip back to the good ol' days of cheezy, beer-ripped exploitation.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

Hey, you lazy bastards! Get off your ass and order some of the videos you've been drooling over throughout this issue! Many of the most obscure titles are available through the places listed below. Send for their catalogs NOW, or be forced to rent from a Blockbuster for the rest of your miserable lives.

BLACKEST HEART VIDEO
c/o Shawn Smith
1291 Hays St. #360
San Leandro, CA 94577

Shawn's extensive listing features some of the meanest, nastiest, most obscure films imaginable. Includes many uncut and letterboxed editions.

FILM THREAT VIDEO
P.O. Box 3170

Los Angeles, CA 90078-3170
An exclusive line of underground auteurs including Richard Kern and Jorg Buttgerit.

SINISTER CINEMA
P.O. Box 4369
Medford, OR 97501-0168

Their thick catalog is crammed with classic horror, serials, westerns, jungle camp, and more. A B-movie addict's delight.

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO
P.O. Box 33664
Seattle, WA 98133

A jaw-dropping array of classic sexploitation, including rare Doris Wishman, H.G. Lewis, Coffin Joe, Dave Friedman, and every imaginable form of grindhouse fare. Mike Vraney's new, huge catalog is only \$5.

VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI
P.O. Box 16-1917
Miami, FL 33116-1917

A one-of-a-kind mix of Eurotrash, Hong Kong, and assorted overseas delights which never make it to U.S. shores. Everything a serious movie fanatic needs—from obscure porno to cult auteurs like Fuller and Melville.

*"Hello, I'm
Johnny Cash..."*

*This is the
full-length
movie about
my life,
my family, the
people I know
and the
music I sing."*



"Johnny Cash"

THE MAN
HIS WORLD
HIS MUSIC!
IN COLOR

...the man who became
**A LEGEND IN
HIS OWN TIME!**

From MGM, the company that gave you **SHAFT**



He hit
the Man
for \$3 million.
Right where
it hurts.
In the diamonds.

COOL BREEZE

And baby, that's cold.